Radical Periodicals In The United States 1890-1960

RADICAL PERIODICALS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1890-1960

FIRST SERIES

Alternative (1948-1951)
Amerasia (1937-1947)
American Appeal (1920-1927)
American Socialist (1914-1917)
American Spectator (1932-1937)
Black & White (1939-1940)
Blast (1916-1917)
China Today (1933-1942)
Class Struggle (1917-1919)
Class Struggle (1931-1937)
Clipper (1940-1941)
Common Sense (1932-1946)
Communist (1919-1921)
Communist International (1919-1940)
Conscientious Objector (1939-1946)
Dialectics (1937-1939)
Enquiry (1942-1945)
Equal Justice (1926-1942)
Forerunner (1909-1916)
Good Morning (1919-1921)
Industrial Pioneer (1921-1926)
Industrial Unionist (1932-1950)
International Class Struggle (1936-1937)
International Review (1936-1939)
International Socialist Review (1900-1918)
International Socialist Review (1940-1959)
Labor Action (1940-1958)
Labor Age (1913-1933)
Labor Power (1934-1935)
Marxist Quarterly (1937)
Militant (1928-1934)
Modern Quarterly (1923-1940)
Modern Review (1947-1950)
Modern Socialist (1941-1942)
Monthly Review (1934-1935)
Monthly Review (1949-1960)
Mother Earth Bulletin (1906-1918)
Nationalist (1889-1891)
New Foundations (1947-1954)
New International (1934-1958)
New Militant (1934-1936)
New Nation (1891-1894)
New Review (1913-1916)
New Trends (1945-1946)
New World Review (1932-1960)
One Big Union Monthly (1919-1938)
Pacifica Views (1943-1947)
Party Organizer (1927-1938)
Politics (1944-1949)
Radical Review (1917-1919)
Rebel (1895-1896)
Retort (1942-1951)
Revolutionary Age (1918-1919)
Revolutionary Age (1929-1932)
Socialist Appeal (1934-1937)
Socialist Review (1932-1940)
Spanish Revolution (1936-1938)
Spanish Revolution (1936-1937)
Student Advocate (1936-1938)
Student Review (1931-1935)
U.S. Week (1941-1942)
Weekly Review (1936-1943)
Workers Age (1932-1941)
Workers' Council (1921)
Workers' League for a Revolutionary Party. Bulletin (1937-1959)
World Survey (1941-1942)
Young Worker (1922-1936)

MODERN SOCIALISM

A Journal of Revolutionary Re-Education

Numbers 1-4

1941-1942

With an Introduction by

GEORGE P. RAWICK

Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

GREENWOOD REPRINT CORPORATION

NEW YORK 1968

This reprint edition reproduces, in an unaltered form, the entire contents of the original publication, as far as it has been possible to determine.

Introduction

Copyright © 1968 by

GREENWOOD REPRINT CORPORATION

This work has been printed on long-life paper and conforms to the standards developed under the sponsorship of the Council on Library Resources.

Printed in the United States of America

Introduction

This periodical appeared for four issues in late 1941 and early 1942. It was the personal organ of Abraham Ziegler, who had been, from 1939 to early 1941, the National Secretary of the small Socialist Union Party and principal editorial contributor to its official organ, *Labor Power*. The Socialist Union Party had split in 1939 from the Industrial Union Party, which in turn had split from the De Leonite Socialist Labor Party in 1932.

The Industrial Union Party and its heirs and offspring were all attempts to break out of the rigid sectarianism of the De Leonite organization in the face of the ferment in the American labor movement that produced mass industrial unionism and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The De Leonites had been advocating mass industrial unionism for so many years that when such a movement actually appeared, the official De Leonite party, the Socalist Labor Party, could only react in a sectarian and hostile fashion. *Modern Socialism* is an indication of the impact of De Leonism on American socialism, and is a part of any history of that strand of socialism in the United States.

While Zeigler had become "convinced that there was no room for splinter groups in the movement and that they are a waste of time organizationally (moreover, the group was torn by internal dissension)," he felt the need to continue some form of socialist discussion. Thus this magazine.

Almost all of the articles in the four issues of the journal were by Zeigler, although a few independent Marxists such as Paul Mattick and Fred Dyer did contribute articles with points of view not identical with that of the editor. There is a great lack of political and theoretical clarity in the journal, but for serious students of the history of socialism in the United States this periodical has significance.

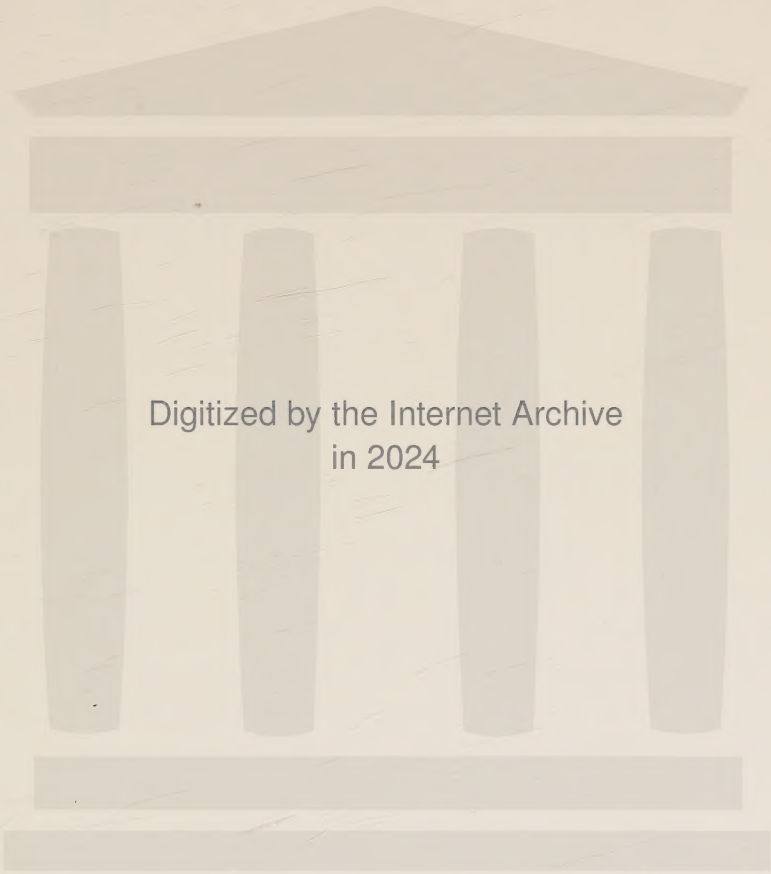
Modern Socialism reflects certain problems that faced all branches of American socialism in the 1930's: the impact of Hitlerism, the degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Stalin, and the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. While Zeigler was clearly no Marxist theoretician, he was able to react to the world about him. He looked for a democratic reformulation of Marxism and rejected the emphasis of the Socialist Labor Party and its heirs upon the building of sectarian industrial unions controlled by the party, in favor of working with and in the mass unions.

Two questions were most important for Zeigler. Is a "Vanguard Party," based on a strictly monolithic conception of internal democracy, necessary in the struggle for socialism? And what should be a proper socialist policy toward World War II?

The editor seems to have rejected the idea of the "Vanguard Party" in his search for a democratic Marxism. But he floundered, and eventually the magazine disappeared because he could discover no other basis for the existence of a Marxist organization.

The discussion the editor conducted on the war question, however, dominated the history of the periodical. In the first issue Zeigler argued that while the war is a struggle between the imperialist powers and thus reactionary, it is also, because of the threat of totalitarianism, a social struggle and, therefore, socialists must find a way to support its progressive aspects. By the third number Zeigler had come to understand that there was no way to straddle the issue. He declared: "*Modern Socialism* bowing to hard political reality, has taken a firm stand in favor of full and complete military support, without equivocation or mental reservation, of the war against Nazism and its Japanese cat's-paw." The last issue of the journal contained the following note: "The undersigned having received notice . . . of his classification in Class 1A and his imminent induction into the armed forces of the United States, announces the suspension of *Modern Socialism* for the duration or such period as, when and if he returns once more to civil life . . . Abraham Zeigler."

—George P. Rawick
Rochester, Michigan, 1968


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/modern-socialism_fall-1941_1_1

MODERN SOCIALISM

A Journal of Revolutionary Re-Education

★ FALL 1941 ★

THE CRISIS IN MARXISM

The Bankruptcy of the Inevitability Cult ★ The Quick and the Living in Marxism ★ The Roots of Socialist Consciousness ★ Immediate Demands, Stepping Stone or Quicksand ★ Traditional Marxism—A Bourgeois Product ★ Political Compromise ★ Dictatorship of the Proletariat ★ The Russian Revolution as a Bourgeois Revolution ★ Socialism—An Historical Alternative ★ A Scientific 20th Century Program ★ A Challenge to Scoffers

★ ★ ★

WAR AND THE WORKERS

5 Cents a Copy

In a Personal Vein

THE appearance of this initial number of MODERN SOCIALISM is a concrete manifestation of the unshakeable determination of a group of Socialist co-thinkers to "carry-on," notwithstanding the fact that they now find themselves organizationally "orphaned."

While the undersigned as Editor and Publisher assumes full responsibility for the contents, it must be understood that without the full cooperation and sympathetic understanding of his co-workers, MODERN SOCIALISM would never have seen the light of day.

And now the Editor has a confession to make. He must acknowledge himself a reformed sectarian. A life-long DeLeonist, he has been a faithful practicioner of the Cult of DeLeonism. His rescue from the morass of sectarianism is due to the impact of the C.I.O. movement. A consideration of the social significance of the tremendous mass upsurge of this movement gave rise to a process of questioning which led to doubts as to the absolute infallibility of the DeLeonist Cult and of traditional Marxism generally. These questionings and doubts led to a complete re-examination and re-evaluation of the basic premises of Marxism and its various tactical applications. As a result, the scales have fallen away and with them the subserviance to ALL forms and manifestations of political cultism, dogmas and faith.

The Editor's break with sectarianism was a protracted process which culminated with the dissolution of the Socialist Union Party. For the past two years he was the National Secretary of this Party and was the principal editorial Contributor of its official organ, *Labor Power*. The Socialist Union Party was one of the splinter groups which periodically clutter up the Socialist Movement. Convinced that there was no room for splinter groups in the movement, and that they are a waste of time organizationally, (moreover, the group was torn by internal dissension), the writer recommended the dissolution of the Socialist Union Party. This recommendation was approved and the party was dissolved.

At the present time, the Editor is without organizational affiliation.

—ABRAHAM ZIEGLER,

Editor and Publisher.

MODERN SOCIALISM

A SOCIALIST QUARTERLY

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1 FALL, 1941

EDITORIALS

TO OUR READERS 2

RUSSIA 4

ARTICLES

THE CRISIS IN MARXISM 7

WAR AND THE WORKERS 42

BOOK REVIEW

THE WORLD OF NATIONS 57

Nationalism, Patriotism and Socialism

Editor and Publisher, ABRAHAM ZIEGLER

MODERN SOCIALISM is published at 140 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, New York. Manuscripts representing all viewpoints are solicited.

Subscription: $1.00 *yearly; Canada,* $1.35; *foreign,* $1.50

Composed by Union Labor and printed by Voluntary Labor in U. S. A.

To Our Readers

With this issue, MODERN SOCIALISM makes its bow.

An independent journal of Scientific Socialism free from party control, MODERN SOCIALISM will appeal to all mentally alert, socially-minded elements.

MODERN SOCIALISM makes its appearance in what may well prove to be the twilight period of the international Socialist movement. The past two decades have witnessed a series of unbroken major disasters. Foremost has been the collapse and degeneration of the Russian Revolution, which has turned the soaring hopes of proletarian emancipation into ashes and has placed the entire Socialist movement of the world on the defensive. On the continent of Europe the whole labor and Socialist movements have been destroyed in toto. In the remaining "free" countries of the world there does not exist a single revolutionary workers movement of any significant proportions capable of decisively challenging the onrushing fascist counter-revolution. Here in the United States, after fifty years of organized activity, the Socialist movement has never been weaker in organizational strength, influence and prestige. The political experience of the past two decades has irrevocably demonstrated in action the political bankruptcy of traditional tactical Marxism as exemplified by the Social Democracy and the Communist-Leninist movements. Both succeeded in building up powerful organizations and winning tremendous influence and prestige, and both collapsed like a house of cards when faced with the acid test.

Traditional Marxism has failed to meet the challenge presented by the crumbling Socialist movement and the onsweeping counter-revolutionary fascist "new order." It continues along the beaten path, repeating old, familiar shibboleths. Like early Christianity, serene in its faith, it awaits the "second coming of Christ," i.e., the inevitable victory of Socialism.

In this darkest hour of crisis, MODERN SOCIALISM enters the lists prepared to give answers both in practice and in theoretical understanding to the social problems of the day.

MODERN SOCIALISM will have a definite policy and direction: it will

fly the standard of Scientific Marxism. Its Marxism, however, will not be sacrosanct, inviolate and beyond criticism; it will not fear to probe deeply and re-examine the basic premises of Marxism. The specific task of MODERN SOCIALISM *will be to come to grips with traditional tactical Marxism* as formulated by Marx and Engels, and *its complex of inevitability.*

MODERN SOCIALISM will not practice revolutionary optimism, nor will it express particular faith in the proletariat as an "inevitable" revolutionary force, historically desined to establish Socialism. In the first place, optimism and faith have no more place in social science than they have in the realm of natural science. The proletariat is historically equipped and endowed to put an end to class rule and exploitation. But history knows no automatic fatalism. The victory of the proletariat and Socialism is merely a *possibility*, provided for by ripened social conditions. Whether this *possibility* will ripen into *actuality* depends upon the conscious understanding of the proletariat and its degree of organization. Not optimism, not pessimism, not faith, but taking science by the hand and following wherever it leads, will be the course pursued by MODERN SOCIALISM.

MODERN SOCIALISM will avoid the futile promiscuity of the open forum and will not compromise with truth nor attempt any appeasement of error in the vain hope of furthering harmony and promoting unity. There can be no true and lasting unity without understanding and theoretical clarification. Nevertheless, MODERN SOCIALISM will not swing to the other extreme of sterile sectarianism and set itself up as the fountain head and sole dispenser of all knowledge, free from all error and frailty. There is no monopoly of knowledge. We know that there are numerous Socialist co-workers who will disagree with our formulations. We will not consider these dissidents as enemies, beyond the pale, worthy of only a "foeman's steel."

MODERN SOCIALISM, accordingly, invites all Socialist writers to make use of its columns with entire freedom, subject to editorial rejoinder.

And now a final word. We spurn in advance the admonition that "it is already too late." We have no illusions as to the nature of the task we have embarked upon. We have counted the cost. *But we will not be deterred from our appointed task.* We mean to go on! Those who believe it is already too late and who have dispiritedly withdrawn or are about to withdraw from the struggle are but cruelly deceiving themselves. In the battle against fascism there can be no retreat or withdrawal. Fascism refuses to recognize apostasy. Fascism asks no quarter and gives none. Fascism pursues the struggle to the bitter end with implacable hatred. There can be no compromise with it.

FORWARD TO THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARY RE-EDUCATION!

RUSSIA

Hitler's brutal invasion has made Russia once more the cynosure of all eyes.

The official representatives of Democratic-Capitalism, Churchill and Roosevelt have hastened to welcome Russia as an ally and to assure the Russian "people" of their full assistance in resisting the Nazi invasion. William Gallacher, Communist M. P., following the Churchill broadcast announced the Communist Party's full support of the Churchill Government. Gallacher admitted that he had previously denounced the war as a "monstrous imperialist war" but went on to explain that "when there is an attack on the vanguard of the working class (meaning Russia) the working class in every country must unite."

MODERN SOCIALISM çatagorically rejects the position that the Stalinist regime is "the vanguard of the working class" or that it has anything in common with the working class and the cause of proletarian emancipation. Stalinist Russia lacks the most elementary requisite for a working class regime, i. e., democracy. The Stalinist regime continues to be a bloody totalitarian dictatorship, with one party, one press, one radio—all of them the echo of Stalin—and which ruthlessly crushes out all dissent however innocent. It has destroyed every trace of the Bolshevik revolution and the proletarian social relations that were instituted under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The Stalinist Bureaucracy has no more in common with the working class, than has the barbaric Hitler-Nazi regime, which in fact has largely patterned itself on Stalinism.

The pitiful remanents of Bolshevism who continue to accept Stalinist Russia as a worker's state base their case on the contention, that notwithstanding its lack of Democracy and worker's rights, the continued existence of a statified economy in Russia, "preserves the essential conquests of the Bolshevik revolution." In this specious political reasoning these self-proclaimed super-Marxists violate the elementary percept of Marxism which teaches that the distinctive character of a given society is determined by the particular social relations prevailing therein. For the rest these

people have to explain how it is that on the one hand, in Stalinist Russia, a statified economy plus dictatorship equals a worker's state, whereas in Germany it constitutes an anti-working class fascist regime. And now come the Nazis to fill the cup of disillusionment to the very brim for our worshippers of the Soviet statified economy. The Nazis have announced that they will continue intact the Soviet Collective Farms!

While MODERN SOCIALISM refuses to recognize Stalinist Russia as a worker's state we are not indifferent to the outcome of Hitler's adventure in Russia. MODERN SOCIALISM rejoices in the magnificent resistance of the Russian masses and definitely prefers a Russian victory as a "lesser evil" to a Hitler victory. This may at first blush appear to be an inconsistency upon our part. But such is not the case. We are not simply confronted with a choice between two anti-working class regimes. There are a number of other factors involved. In the first place Hitler is definitely the aggressor who is seeking to impose a compound "master-race" enslavement upon the Russian masses. The Russian masses have chosen Stalinism in preference to Hitlerism even at the price of death and extermination. We can fully understand this decision and are in full agreement with it. Then, and even more important, is the fact that the Hitler military machine and the Hitler plans for world conquest menace the Western Hemisphere. A Hitler victory in Russia while by no means assuring him ultimate victory would nevertheless strengthen his forces considerably. Contrarywise, a Hitler defeat or even a setback in Russia would be the turning point of the war and would seal the doom of the Nazi regime and its dreams of world conquest and "master-race" enslavement. Stalinism, on the other hand, does not represent a military danger. It lacks the strength for world conquest. It is these considerations which lead us to a definite preference for a Russian victory as a "lesser evil" to a Nazi victory.

The real danger of Stalinism is internal. Under the "trojan horse" popular front policy Stalinism, through its American foreign agents, the Communist Party, acquired a tremendous influence in the American Labor movement, actually capturing administrative control of a powerful bloc of national unions within the C. I. O. This Stalinist influence was wielded to serve and forward the foreign policy and the immediate needs of the Stalinist regime in

Russia. A veritable reign of terror was instituted against militant anti-Stalinist trade union workers who dared to oppose the subordination of the American Labor movement to the needs of the Stalinist regime.

The signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact dealt a severe blow to Communist prestige within the labor movement. This blow however, was not the debacle some over-enthusiastic anti-Stalinist elements led themselves to believe it was. A number of the "fellow travelers" deserted and the Stalinists themselves were compelled to give ground and retire to the background. But it was an orderly retreat. The C. P. merely awaited a more favorable opportunity. Hitler's invasion of Russia and the Allies' desperate need of an Eastern front has now provided this opportunity. While official sources are careful to point out that accepting Russia as an ally does not involve any compromise with Communism, the fact remains that in the degree that Russia succeeds in relieving the pressure against Great Britain the prestige of Stalinism and of the various Communist Parties is bound to be enhanced. A straw to indicate which way the wind is blowing, is the action of Mayor LaGuardia in accepting the endorsement of the Left-Wing, Communist controlled, A. L. P. faction, in his mayoralty campaign. The defeat of President James B. Carey of the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers Union (C. I. O.) signalizes that Stalinism has once more taken the offensive in the American Labor movement. Stalinism has once more become a spreading cancer gnawing at the vitals of American Labor.

In their never ceasing campaign to extend the influence of Stalinism within the ranks of Labor, Stalin's foreign agents, the American Communist Party, is attempting to capitalize upon the need of supporting Russia. Workers should be on guard against any such blandishments. While momentarily, the interests of the heinous Stalinist Bureaucracy coincide with those of the working class—nevertheless, Hitler's invasion did not change the nature of the Stalinist beast. Stalinism remains the deadly enemy of the working class.

Against the Hitler regime Russia must be supported as a "lesser evil," but there must be no let up in the struggle against Stalinism.

THE CRISIS IN MARXISM

The past two decades has witnessed an unbroken series of smashing and humiliating defeats for the international proletariat. The Russian Revolution, which was the high water mark of proletarian hope has turned to ashes; its degeneration has dragged down the whole international movement, creating well-nigh insurmountable barriers to the propagation of Socialist principles. Heretofore considered impregnable citadels of Socialist and Labor movements have fallen like so many houses of cards before the onward sweep of the fascist counter-revolution. "Everywhere where it is not already wearing the fascist yoke, the working class is in disorderly retreat." Within the ranks the poisonous weeds of defeatism and apostasy are growing apace. Without, the enemies of Marxism are holding high carnival over what they proclaim to be its corpse. Marxism is bankrupt; Marxism has failed, is the burden of their rejoicing.

The crisis in Marxism has called forth an incessant flow of "evaluations" and "re-examinations" of Marxism. These "evaluations" and "re-examinations" far from throwing any light on the predicament of traditional Marxism and its theoretical and organizational bankruptcy merely serve as smokescreens to cover the precipitate retreat of the "evaluators and re-examiners" back into the safe harbour of bourgeois respectability.

The moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the Marx critics and their reversion to bourgeois escapism, ala Max Eastman, does not however, remove the crisis in Marxism and the necessity of coming to grips with it.

The question has been asked:

> "Has not Marxism, the very foundation of all revolutionary science, been shaken by the failure of its disciples to give adequate answers in practice and theoretical under-

standing to the historical developments of the last two decades?"*

This question touches the very crux of the problem here presented. Unless Marxism is to be reduced to the levels of a revolutionary theology these "adequate answers" must be forthcoming. Failing such "adequate answers" Marxism would have to forfeit all standing as a science and surrender all claims to scientific validity.

It has been the supreme merit of Scientific Marxism that it, and it alone, has shown itself capable of interpreting and explaining the inner laws of capitalism. Scientific Marxism, freed from the deadweight of traditional Marxism, can also meet the challenge presented by the social phenomenon of the 20th Century and the problems it poses.

The Bankruptcy of the Inevitibility Cult

The purpose of this article is to present this answer and explanation, and to account for the failure of traditional Marxism to successfully cope with these problems.

So as to avoid all possible misunderstanding respecting the position of MODERN SOCIALISM, we herewith state that by the principles of Marxism we mean the law of Surplus Value and the law of the Materialist Conception of History and its corollary the Class Struggle, as first discovered and formulated by Karl Marx and his co-worker, Frederick Engels. By traditional tactical Marxism we mean the specific, transitory tactical applications and formulations which Marx and Engels made upon the basis of the particular, limited historical conditions of their time.

MODERN SOCIALISM, as we have stated editorially, rejects traditional tactical Marxism and its complex of inevitability as historically outmoded and scientifically inadequate.

The task outlined brings us to a consideration of the nature of traditional, tactical Marxism.

The cult of inevitability is of the very essence of traditional Marxism.

To Marx and Engels, the inevitable victory of Socialism was implicit in the class character of the proletariat and in the very

*Dwight McDonald, "National Defense—The Case for Socialism," *Partisan Review.*

processes of social development. Marx gave classic expression to this view at the conclusion of his monumental work, Capital:

> "One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usuable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing numbers of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all the means of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter on the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of private capitalist property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated." (1)

Here we have the condition sine-qua-non of the Marxian tactical philosophy.

Philip Rahv, the Marxist intellectual and critic, has brilliantly contrasted the promise and the reality of this prognosis.†

He asks:

> "Now in what has the optimism of the Marxist doctrine traditionally sought its justification?"

He answers:

> "Obviously in the hypothesis that the decline of capitalism

(1) Capital, Kerr Edition, Pages 836-837

†"Marxism Today—The Quick and the Living," *Partisan Review,* May-June, 1940.

> necessarily involves the maturity of the revolutionary awareness of the working class and its readiness to intervene in the historic process to its own advantage. Experience however, has shown that these two factors are by no means so closely linked as they were once assumed to be. Capitalism is decaying and the phenomenon it is producing is far more hideous than anything forecast even by its most hostile critics—its sole perspective is war, and nothing but war—yet the workers have been unable to act in any decisive fashion and there exists in no country today a workers movement of any size or influence which is carrying forward the revolutionary tradition and which can be seriously counted upon to utilize the opportunities for action that will no doubt rise in the near future."

That traditional Marxism, preferring to "ride out the storm," has failed to meet or resolve the contradiction so eloquently pictured by Rahv, merely serves to underline its theoretical and scientific inadequacy.

Only a bigoted sectarian, who would convert Marxism into a religious dogma, to be defended at all costs and against all attacks irrespective of their merit or validity, will deny that this Marxian prognosis of inevitability has been historically refuted. In fact, this concept of inevitability completely overlooked what has emerged as the paramount social problem of our day, i. e., the triumphant fascist counter-revolution.

The Quick and the Living in Marxism

Granting the failure of the Marxian tactical prognosis of inevitability, does this necessarily involve, as the anti-Marxists so vociferously contend, the bankruptcy of the basic structural principles of Marxism? By no means. It is elementary that in the field of science generally, a distinction must be drawn between the fundamental principles of a given science and the *application* of these principles to given phenomena. The fact that it was Marx who discovered and formulated the basic laws of social science does not invest his tactical applications of these fundamental principles to the given historical conditions of his time with divine infallibility. There is a basic distinction between the principles of

Marxism as an analysis of capitalism and an explanation of the class character of modern society and the inner laws of its movement and development, and the specific tactical formulations that Marx and Engels made in the course of applying these principles to given historical conditions. That the Marxian tactical formulations have proved in practice to be untenable does not detract from the scientific validity of Marxism.

The distinction between the basic, structural principles of a given science and their particular application or explanation is vividly portrayed by the situation now prevailing in the field of evolution. Darwin is popularly looked upon as the originator of the theory of the evolution of man by means of descent with modification. Historically, this is incorrect. Darwin was preceded in this formulation of the theory of evolution by the 19th century scientists Lamarck and Buffon. However, it was not until Darwin formulated his theory of Natural Selection, which is not per se the theory of evolution but an explanation of the workings, or the mechanism, of descent with modification in actual practice, that the law of evolution became popularized. Now, it so happens that Darwinism, or Natural Selection, is not the only explanation of the phenomena and workings of the principles of evolution. Practically all present-day scientists accept the principles of evolution, but there is widespread disagreement as to the explanation of its mechanics. In addition to Natural Selection, there are half a dozen other explanations, each differing with each other, but each basing itself upon the fundamental principles of evolution. Moreover, present-day scientists for the most part reject Darwin's formula of Natural Selection as the explanation for the mechanism of evolution. This, however, by no means invalidates the basic principles of evolution. Professor George Howard Parker of Harvard University, in his authoritative primer on evolution, has pointed out:

> "Practically all biologists today accept without any reservations descent with modification as a process of nature. . . . At the same time that these biologists accept descent with modification as an actual occurrence in nature they are most skeptical and reserved about what may be called the driving force behind descent. . . . To this question no biologist has a clear and unequivocal answer. It is this uncertainty that has

> been seized upon by a few thoughtless critics who have attempted to discredit in the eyes of the general public the well established fact of descent with modification with the explanations of descent This confusion due to ignorance, is the source of most of the contentions now met with in evolutionary controversies. It does not characterize the clear thinker. Because biologists have not as yet discovered how evolution takes place is no reason for denying evolution itself." (2)

This is precisely the situation in the case of the anti-Marxists, who confuse the basic principles of Marxism with the particular tactical application of these principles by Marx and Engels, and thereupon proceed to sweepingly condemn Marxism as a science because of the failure in practice of such tactical formulations. We repeat with Professor Parker: This process of "reasoning" is confusion due to ignorance and does not characterize the clear thinker.

The Roots of Socialist Consciousness

The fountain-head of the doctrine of inevitability is the Marx-Engels concept of Socialist consciousness, or more precisely how the proletariat is to be won over to Socialist consciousness and launched on the political revolutionary road. To Marx and Engels Socialist consciousness and the victory of the Socialist revolution was the inevitable by-product of the class position of the proletariat and the processes of social development.

The proletariat, Marx taught, can only acquire Socialist consciousness through the medium of its own movement, i. e., political experience, and, never, by propaganda or abstract education. To Marx and Engels the all important task of the Socialist movement was to get the working class to move forward as a class, and it mattered not how halting that movement might be or how backward the program that actuated them. Once the workers started moving their experience would soon bring them to the correct theoretical path. Thus, Marx was led to state: "Every real step

---

(2) "What is Evolution?" Pages 62, 63
(3) Preface to Gotha Program

of movement is more important than a dozen platforms." (3) In a series of letters to American correspondents, Engels trenchantly expounded this philosophy of movement. Commenting on the formation of a Labor Party in New York, Engels wrote:

> "The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organization of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers party, and this step has been taken far more rapidly than we had a right to hope, and that is the main thing. That the first program of this party is still confused and highly deficient, that it has set up the banner of Henry George, these are inevitable evils but also only transitory ones. The masses must have time and opportunity to develop and they can only have the opportunity when they have their own movement—no matter in what form so long as it is only *their own* movement, in which they are driven forward by *their own mistakes* and learn wisdom by hurting themselves." (4)

In a subsequent letter Engels laid down the proposition that, "a million or two workingmen votes next November for a *bona-fide* workingman's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform." (5)

Other pertinent extracts from this series of letters are:

> "The great thing is to get the working class to move *as a class;* that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction, and all who resist H. G. or Powderly, will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own." (6)

> "Our theory is a theory of evolution and not a dogma to be learned by heart and to be repeated mechanically. The less it is drilled into the Americans from the outside and the more they test it with their own experience—with the help of the Germans—the deeper will it pass into their flesh and blood. When we returned to Germany in the spring of 1848, we joined the Democratic Party as the only possible means of getting the ear of the working class; we were the

---

(4) Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence, Letter 202
(5) Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence, Letter 203
(6) Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence, Letter 203

most advanced wing of that party but still a wing of it." (7) Unfortunately, the high hopes held out by Engels for the great progress to come as a result of this beginning of class movement upon the part of the workers failed to materialize. Fifty years later, the net result of this "movement" was the sweeping electoral success of the Roosevelt New Deal.

The dominant role that movement and political experience play in generating Socialist consciousness was a constantly recurring theme in the voluminous Marx-Engels Correspondence. Both Marx and Engels joined in viewing the backward British political labor movement as a passing phase, a reflection of the monopoly of world commerce enjoyed by British capital and the venal character of the official British labor leaders—a passing phase that was sure to be wiped out as the British working class obtained wider political experience. Replying to correspondents who wondered at the continued political backwardness of the British Labor movement, Engels wrote:

> "There will be workers in Parliament in increasing numbers and each one worse than the last. But that is necessary in England. All the scoundrels who played the part of respectable bourgeois radicals here at the time of the International must show themselves in Parliament for what they are. Then the masses will turn Socialists here too. Industrial overproduction will do the rest." (8)

Engels' wish was soon granted. The official labor leaders appeared on the benches of Parliament in increasing numbers. In due time the British Labor Party was organized and it rapidly assumed "class" proportions, becoming a political force in the land. Twice, in 1924 and 1929 the British Labor Party actually assumed the reigns of government. Since Engels' day the British capitalist labor leader has had every opportunity for exposing himself and demonstrating his total political incapacity and bankruptcy, up to the hilt. And he has proceeded to do so with a vengeance upon every conceivable occasion. Furthermore, the industrial overproduction which Engels so prophetically foretold, has now had Great Britain in its toils for many, many years. And yet, today, after fifty years of movement and political experience, the British

(8) Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence, Letter 195
(7) Marx and Engels Selected Correspondence, Letter 204

working class is no further advanced along the line of Socialist consciousness than it was in Engels' day. This is the sad but incontrovertible truth.

Immediate Demands:-Stepping Stone or Quicksand?

The Marx-Engels philosophy of movement and political experience found concrete expression in a series of "immediate demands" which became standard clauses in all Social-Democratic political programs. (Before proceeding further it becomes necessary to point out that traditional Marxists invariably make the error of confusing the trade union, economic struggle with the "immediate demands" reform struggle. There is a vital distinction between the two. Trade union, economic action is not a reform since it does not aim at improving and bettering the condition of the workers. The principal function of trade unionism consists of providing the workers with means of realizing the capitalist law of wages at current market prices. Labor unions can only act as a brake on the natural and unavoidable tendency of capitalist production to progressively deteriorate the standards of labor. Such concessions as labor gains on the economic field it wins by the power of its own class organs and not through the instrumentality of the capitalist state machinery. The trade union daily class struggle on the economic field is an inseparable part of the larger class struggle for the proletarian emancipation.)

The Social-Democratic program of "immediate demands" which started out as a *means* to the *end* of the Socialist revolution soon degenerated into the *end itself*. The fight for reforms both political and social became the principal task of the Social-Democracy. Reformism supplanted revolutionary Marxism as the road to power. The enactment into law of the various "immediate demands" was to gradually convert capitalism into Socialism.

The success of fascist demagogy underlines a grave tactical weakness under fire, with which the proletariat is afflicted.

Daniel DeLeon, pioneer American Marxist and Socialist pathfinder was the first Marxist thinker to discern this besetting tactical weakness of the proletariat.

In his classic address, *"Two Pages From Roman History,"*[22] DeLeon probes this tactical weakness of the proletariat.

"Going again no further back than the days of feudalism, the distinctive mark of the bourgeoisie, or the then revolutionary class, was the possession of the material means essential to its own ECONOMIC SYSTEM; on the contrary, the distinctive mark of the proletariat today is the being wholly stripped of such material possession. While wealth, logically enough, was the badge of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, poverty, likewise logically enough, is the badge of the proletariat. The sign, the symptom, the gauge of bourgeois ripeness, as of the ripeness for emancipation of all previous subject classes, was their ownership of the physical materials essential to their own ECONOMIC SYSTEM; the sign, on the contrary, of the proletariat is a total lack of all material-economic power—a novel accompaniment to a revolutionary class, in the whole range of Class Revolutions.

"Does this difference establish a difference in kind between the proletariat and the old bourgeoisie as a revolutionary class? It does not. But does establish a serious difference in tactical quality of the two forces, a difference that imparted strength to the former revolutionary forces under fire, while it imparts weakness to the proletariat.

> ". . . Wealth imparts strength, strength self-reliance. Where this is coupled with class interest, whose development is hampered by social shells, the shell is bound to be broken through. The process is almost automatic.
>
> "Differently with the proletariat. It is a force, every atom of which has a stomach to fill, with wife and children with stomachs to fill, and, withal, a precarious ability to attend to

---

[22]Lewis Corey, in his work, *"The Decline of American Capitalism,"* relates that Lenin considered this address to be a masterpiece.

*Care must be taken not to confuse the present existing, epigone S. L. P. with the S. L. P. of DeLeon. The two have nothing in common. It is the historical misfortune of DeLeon to have become the stock, in trade of as bureaucratic a political machine as ever befouled the Socialist movement. The present S. L. P. claims to be DeLeon's vicar on earth. However, the existing S. L. P. occupies the same relationship to DeLeon that the Stalinist C. P. occupies to Lenin and which before it the German Social-Democracy occupied to Marx. The German Social-Democracy and the Stalinist C. P. venerate every shred of Marx's and Lenin's writings, at all times ready to render lip service to their teachings, while in practice they betray them. In Russia, Stalinism has mumified the body of Lenin and made it a sacred ikon. Here in the United States the Petersonian Bureaucracy in control of the S. L. P. has lacked this advantage but it has nevertheless founded a DeLeonist Church and reduced his teachings to social theology.

such urgent needs. Cato the Elder said in his usual blunt way: 'The belly has no ears.' At times this circumstance may be a force, but it is only a fitful force. Poverty breeds lack of self-reliance. Material insecurity suggests temporary devices. Sops and lures become baits. And the one and the other are in the power of the present ruling class to manoeuver with.

"Obviously the difference I have been pointing out between the bourgeoisie and the present, the proletarian, revolutionary forces, shows the bourgoisie to have been sound, while the proletarian, incomparably more powerful by its numbers, to be afflicted with a certain weakness under fire, a weakness that, unless the requisite measures of counteraction be taken, must inevitably cause the course of history to be deflected."

The capitalist class and its political agents was not slow in utilizing this vulnerability of the proletariat. The reactionary Bismarck, in Germany, set the pace for the rest of the capitalist world. In an attempt to retard the growth of the Social-Democracy and weaken the influence of the Socialist trade union movement, Bismarck introduced a widespread system of social reforms. While Bismarck did not succeed in his immediate objective, he builded better than he knew by preparing the ground for the victory of Hitler. The German working class drained of its instinctive revolutionary class initiative by the struggle for political reforms, paralyzed and deadened by sops and palliatives, stood helplessly by, vacillating and wavering, while Hitler proceeded to establish his bloody Nazi dictatorship. In Great Britain the successes of the British Labor Party called forth the Lloyd George program of social reforms which was later taken up and broadened out by the Tory Party until Tory Socialism became a byword in Great Britain. Here in the United States the crisis of capitalism produced the Roosevelt New Deal. March, 1932 found American capitalism tottering on the brink of social catastrophe. The workers were in a "dangerous" mood. Their confidence in the omnipotence of capitalism was rapidly being undermined by the do-nothing policy of the Hoover Administration. In this dark hour, Roosevelt through his New Deal program of social reforms saved the day for American capitalism. The efficacy of social reform in damming a rising revolutionary tide and tying the workers to the chariot of capitalism did not go unnoticed in capital-

ist circles.

The *New York Times,* resisting great pressure from its top-capitalist associates supported Roosevelt in the 1936 Presidential election campaign on the following grounds among others: "We also believe that in a very fundamental way the President's re-election will provide insurance against radicalism of the sort which the United States has most to fear. We say this for several reasons.

"It would be blind . . . not to appreciate at full value and to wish to conserve for the uncertain years that lie immediately ahead, the unquestioned confidence which Mr. Roosevelt enjoys among the distressed masses who have been the worst victims of the depression. The masses still remember their acute disillusion in the public (read capitalist, A.Z.) leadership of 1932, and have with reason felt that the President has tried to restore hope, equalize opportunity and prevent the excesses of the recent past." Editorial, October 1, 1936.

"Immediate demands" or reforms are of a twofold nature: (1) political or structural, (2) social or palliatives. Structural reforms modify the existing political structure of society while social reforms are aimed at the improvement and betterment of the lot of the worker under capitalism. In the early period of capitalism's development when it played a progressive role, the political structure of capitalism was still incrusted with remnants of feudal absolutism. In this progressive period of capitalism structural, political reforms, extending political democracy were highly desirable since they facilitated the growth of capitalism and the proletariat. Political democracy is the most favorable condition for the development of the proletariat and, as such the Social-Democracy from its inception was vitally concerned with the extension of political democracy. However, once capitalist production achieves its full maturity and enters upon its "descending phase" it becomes a reactionary force which resolutely bars the road to further social progress and whose continued rule can only lead to social chaos and barbarism.

The period of capitalist maturity marks the emergence of the proletariat as a full-fledged social force. The stage is now set for the final struggle for the conquest of power. At this late date further attempts at political reform, at shoring up the tottering structure of capitalism, merely plays into the hands of the reaction, since they serve to obscure and relegate the real and immediate goal, i.e., the

demolition and dismantling of the entire capitalist structure. In the degree that attempts at propping up the tottering structure of capitalism are temporarily successful they merely postpone and endanger the final emancipation of humanity.

Social reforms, from the very first, lacked the historical justification of structural political reforms. Increasing impoverishment and the growing insecurity of the proletariat is a fundamental law of capitalist production. No amount of legislation can repeal this basic law of capitalism without at the same time repealing capitalism itself and its wage-slavery foundations. Reformist efforts to secure betterment of the workers lot by law are to be classified in the same category with the attempts of certain Southern States to repeal the Law of Evolution by legislative enactment.

Leninism repudiated the Social-Democratic vulgarization of reform struggle into a denial of the basic Marxist tenet of the class nature of the state and its governmental machinery. Nevertheless, Lenin proceeded to "improve" upon the Marx-Engels philosophy of political movement by converting it into a philosophy of political amoralism. Leninism appeared at a time when International capitalism had become thoroughly reactionary, and there was no further justification for a program of "immediate demands" in advanced capitalist countries. But this consideration did not deter Lenin. Confronted with a continued backward working class Lenin proposed the policy of raising a series of fake and impossible "partial demands" for the purpose of plunging the workers into a struggle against capitalism and demonstrating to them by their own experience the inability of capitalism to grant even elementary demands. This philosophy of political amoralism was frankly expounded in a *Thesis on Tactics* adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International. The *Thesis* conceding "that no lasting betterment of the position of the proletariat is possible under capitalism and that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is a pre-requisite for the achievement of such betterment," proceeds to revise Marx by laying down the precept that it is the duty of all Communist Parties, "to put forward partial demands and fight for their fulfillment REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE PROFIT SYSTEM OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS." (Emphasis supplied.) This directive is defended

on the ground, "that the chief revolutionary characteristic of the present period lies in the fact that the most modest demands of the masses are incompatible with the existence of capitalist society, therefore the struggle, even for these very modest demands, is bound to develop into a struggle for communism." A revealing illustration of the concrete political application of this doctrine is supplied by the action of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in supporting the thoroughly fraudulent and semi-fascist 1940 "Ham and Eggs" campaign in California. Taken to task for their participation in this cruel hoax on the deluded masses the Leninist-Trotskyists responded: "It is the duty of a revolutionary party to stay with the masses and go through their experiences with them precisely in order to hasten their development toward Socialism." Very well. Applying this logic generally it would be necessary for a revolutionary party to follow the masses wherever they were led by the pied-pipers of capitalist illusions, for example, into the New Deal Democratic party, or into the ranks of Coughlin's fascist organization. Here we have the ripe fruit of "following" the masses and pandering to their ignorance.

Thus we see that contrary to the contention of its present day proponents the struggle for reforms does not serve as a "grinding stone that sharpens the revolutionary consciousness of the workers," nor yet is it "a stimuli for the development of revolutionary working class consciousness." The struggle for reforms and its deleterious effects has proven in practice to be the surest method of disarming the workers and paralyzing and deadening their instinctive revolutionary class initiative, making them an easy prey to counter-revolutionary, fascist demagogy.

The failure of the international proletariat to accept Socialist, working class ideology in any significant numbers, emperically demonstrates the fallacy of the Marx-Engels conception that movement and political experience are the generators of Socialist consciousness and the principal educators of the proletariat.

Traditional Marxism—A Bourgeois Product

We have seen that the Marx-Engels program of structural social reformism had historical validity because of unripe material and social conditions. The entire program of traditional tactical Marxism

was the product and the idealized proletarian expression of the needs of the bourgeois revolution, both political and economic.

Tactical Marxism, as originally formulated by Marx-Engels was not a manual for the institution of a SOCIALIST Revolution, but was a product of the uncompleted BOURGEOIS revolution, which had as its immediate concern the completion of the Bourgeois revolution under proletarian auspices. The fact that, historically speaking, the proletarian revolution dovetailed into the bourgeois revolution, enormously complicated the task of the organized Marxist movement. From the very beginning the Marxist tacticians were confronted with a contradiction between theory and practice, between scientific theory and actual reality. Already in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels had sketched in broad outlines the basic principles of Scientific Socialism, and by the middle of the fifties the edifice of Socialist science had been completely worked out. But although the proletariat had thus become equipped with a full-blown Socialist theory, this did not mean that it could proceed directly with the task of launching the Socialist, classless society. Socialism can only be the final product of a fully developed capitalist system of production, which has solved the basic problem of productivity and has made it possible for man "to make the ascent from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom." But the capitalist society of that day and time was far from being fully developed; on the contrary, it was still in its early the continent of Europe and retard the development of the productformative stages, while feudal restrictions continued to clutter up immediate task of the proletariat was, not the introduction of a Socialist society, that would be a futile, utopian dream. The completion of the unfinished Bourgeois revolution, both politically and economically, was the immediate tactical task of the proletariat and its organized theoretical representative—Marxism.

This essentially bourgeois character of traditional Marxism is reflected in the very nature of its two principle tactical tenets. (1) The policy of political compromise and cooperation with the bourgeoisie whenever it acted in a revolutionary manner; (2) the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Political Compromise is a tactic developed out of the exigencies of the bourgeois revolution. The goal of the bourgeois revolution

Political Compromise

was but a limited one, in a revolutionary sense. The bourgeoisie of course, did not aim at the suppression of ALL class rule and its political apparatus, but merely at the replacement of feudal political absolutism with capitalist, class democracy. The bourgeosie being merely interested in the *transformation* of the feudal political state and not in the abolition of class society, could engage in compromises and political log-rolling with the feudal nobility without endangering or sacrificing its class interests. In England, the classical country of the bourgeois revolution, the revolution was actually carried out by a gradual process of compromise with the ruling nobility which resulted in the bourgeoisification of the English Monarchy and nobility. As we have previously pointed out, when the organized Marxist movement appeared upon the historical scene, the bourgeoisie had not yet completed its revolution against feudal absolutism. In England, and more particularly upon the Continent, the bourgeoisie was engaged in an attempt to substitute political democracy for the remnants of feudal absolutism which still continued to exist. This was a progressive movement, since political democracy furthered the development of the revolutionary proletariat, and Marx and Engels cooperated with the bourgeoisie in the struggle for political democracy. To be sure, this was a compromise with the revolutionary goal of the proletariat since in the last and final analysis it was the bourgeoisie who were the main enemy of the working class, but it was an unavoidable compromise dictated by insurmountable material and social limitations. There were impatient elements within the movement who balked at such a policy of political compromise. After the downfall of the Paris Commune a group of Blanquist Communards issued a manifesto declaring:

> "We are Communists because we wish to obtain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery."

To this challenge Engels replied:

> "The German Communists are communists because, through

all the intermediary stations and compromises, erected not by them, but by the course of historical development, they clearly see and perpetually follow the one final aim, the abolition of classes and the creation of a social system in which there will no longer be any place for private property in land or in the means of production. The thirty-three Blanquists are Communists because they imagine that, since *they* want to leap over intermediate stations and compromises, the cause is as good as won, and if (and of this they are firmly convinced) things 'begin moving' one of these days and power gets into their hands, 'Communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. Consequently, if this can not be done immediately, they are not Communists.

"What childish naivete—to put forward one's own impatience as a theoretical argument."[10]

Marx and Engels at all times saw and followed the final goal in the maze of compromise, and during their lifetime the Social-Democracy retained its proletarian, class struggle basis. But already, even before Engels' death, a strong current of petit-bourgeois reformism and compromise made itself felt within the German Social-Democracy which was the pace-setter for the International Social-Democracy. The task of carrying through the bourgeois revolution, which the bourgeoisie in Germany had cowardly surrendered to the proletariat, was slowly but surely transforming the German party into a party of bourgeois liberalism. The German bourgeois revolution of 1848 found the German bourgeoisie relatively much stronger than the French bourgeoisie were in 1792, "and behind the big bourgeoisie stood the proletariat." The June Days in France thoroughly frightened the German bourgeoisie. It became apparent that the real beneficiaries of a victory over the feudal reactionaries would be the embattled proletariat. The chastened bourgeoisie proceeded to make their submission to the nobility so that they could present a united front against the rising and threatening proletariat. The bourgeois revolution was thus still-born. Though the

[10] *"Program of the Communard-Blanquists."* Volkstaat 1874, No. 73.

[11] As early as 1899 the elder Liebknecht sounded the tocsin of alarm in his famous pamphlet. *"No Compromise."* He warned against the growing tendency towards class collaboration that was manifesting itself within the party at that time. Prophetically, he warned that if the party continued on the course of abandonment of its class struggle sheet-anchor it would cease to be a party of Socialism and proletarian emancipation.

Marxian leaders of the party made every effort to steer a straight class struggle course, the exigencies of the situation, i. e. the necessity of raising purely bourgeois issues (which in the advanced countries the bourgeoisie themselves fought out) not only attracted a growing circle of petit-bourgeois intellectuals but gave the party itself a distinct bourgeois hue and slant. After Engels' death and the removal of his restraining influence, although the Social- Democracy continued to pay lip service to Marxism and bandied about the catch-pharses of Socialism, it rapidly slid down the inclined plane of compromise and opportunism into the morass of bourgeois liberalism. In substance, if not in form and language, the German Social-Democracy became the spokesman for and the party of Bourgeois liberalism.

It is the irony of history that it was not until 1918 that the capitalist revolution was completed in Germany under the leadership of the Social-Democracy, "the party of Marx and Engels." At the same time, the Social-Democracy definitely and for all times established its essential bourgeois character by drowning the rising proletarian revolution in blood.

Today the tactic of political compromise takes the specific form of a Labor Party. It is accounted the sacred duty of all revolutionists to support a reformist Labor Party as a "step forward." But in the present era of Monopoly-Imperialist Capitalism, the revolutionary party under penalty of extinction may *not* support political compromise in any shape, manner or form whatsoever. DeLeon has trenchantly expressed this revolutionary truism in the following language:*

"Of all revolutionary epochs, the present draws sharpest the line between the conflicting class interests. Hence the organizations of the revolution of our generation must be the most uncompromising of any that yet appeared on the stage of history. The program of this revolution consists not in any one detail. It demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist system and its system of wage slavery; the total extinction of class rule is its object. Nothing short of that—whether as a first, a temporary, or any other sort of step can at this late date receive recognition in the camp of the modern revolution."

*Reform or Revolution, Page 15.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

We come now to a consideration of the very pivot of Marxian tactics, i. e., the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat as conceived by Marx was a transitory political structure; the working class, organized as the ruling class, to supplant the political rule of the bourgeoisie.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat was designed to bridge over the gap between the then existing backward and undeveloped condition of production and the transition period of its necessary development and perfection. In his preface to *Capital* Marx had pointed out that capitalist society and its nations:

> ". . . can neither clear by bold leaps nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs."

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, in the language of the *Paris Commune,*[12] ". . . was the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour." And thereby it served to "shorten and lessen the birth-pangs of the new society."

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat was singularly misunderstood and confused by its proponents and opponents. In the first place the official Social-Democracy of the Second International completely suppressed this basic tenet of traditional Marxian tactics. Since the Social-Democracy had become thoroughly reformistic and looked upon liberalism and reformism as the direct route to Socialism, the Marxian concept of the class nature of the political state was thoroughly alien to its political philosophy. A new generation of Social-Democrats grew up to whom the Dictatorship of the Proletariat was merely a passing phrase of no basic significance in Marxist theory. Kautsky, the chief theoretician of the Second International, in a shamefaced attempt to excuse his "burying" of the Dictatorship, resurrected the old bourgeois, philistine arguments that the Dictatorship was opposed to democracy. Marx, Kautsky contended,

[12]Marx, Page 78.

merely used the phrase on a number of occasions as a literary figure of speech.

It remained for Lenin and the successful Bolshevik Revolution to restore the concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat to its rightful position in the realm of Marxian traditional tactics. But in doing so Lenin went to the opposite extreme of overlooking the limited, historical-dialectical character of this tactic. Attempting to make "a virtue out of a necessity," he sought to establish the tactic forced upon the Bolsheviks by unfavorable conditions as something applicable for all time to come, and recommended it to the international proletariat as "the model Socialist tactic to be universally imitated." This language, used by Rosa Luxemburg in a different connection nevertheless admirably characterizes the attempt by Lenin to make the tactic of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat a sacred cow for the entire international proletariat.

In an oft-quoted letter to Wedemeyer[13] Marx wrote: "The class-struggle leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat." This has been seized upon as justification for the attempt to give the tactic of the Dictatorship of the Proletatriat universal application and validity, but nothing can be further from the truth. When Marx penned the foregoing quotation he was not laying down a fundamental, basic principle, universally applicable under ALL historical and social conditions. Not at all. Marx was merely evaluating the given material conditions of 1852, the period of which he was writing. To assume that today, when capitalism has long reached full-orbed economic and social development, that Marx would continue to state the problem of power in this form is to strain credibility. Whatever historical validity the Dictatorship of the Proletariat may have had at one time, today this tactic has become thoroughly outmoded and obsolete.[14] The attempt

[13]Marx-Engels *Selected Correspondence,* Letter No. 18.

[14]True enough, there still continue to exist a number of small states and colonies whose backward material and social conditions prevents them from establishing immediately a Socialist society in their own right. However, under the present conditions of prevailing Imperialism these nations and colonies would be unable to exist as independent Workers States in a capitalist-surrounded world. The only hope of small oppressed nations and colonies is the Socialist World Revolution. In the present era of Imperialism small nations and colonies can no more escape the fatal political and economic attraction of the world powers, than the heavenly satellites can free themselves from the solar attraction of the planets.

to superimpose a "Workers State" on modern social and economic conditions would inevitably degenerate into a dictatorship OVER the proletariat, a counterpart of the bloody Stalinist regime. Only hopeless romanticists who look upon Marxism as a sort of sacred dogma whose specific, transitory forms may not be questioned, and who thereby repudiate the scientific character of Marxism, can continue to adhere to the outmoded concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The Russian Revolution a "Bourgeois" Revolution

Traditional, tactical Marxism scored its one and only success (if we exclude the *Paris Commune*) in the Bolshevik Revolution. The course of the Russian revolution clearly illustrates the essential bourgeois character and limitations of traditional Marxism. Prior to the Russian revolution all shades of Socialist opinion (including Lenin) were agreed that the coming revolution in Russia could only be a bourgeois revolution. After the first, the February revolution there was a sharp divergence in opinion as to the future course to be followed by the proletariat. The Mensheviks took the position that inasmuch as the Bourgeois Revolution had been successful in defeating the feudal reactionaries and in establishing a regime of political democracy, the future task of the Socialist movement was one of "opposition," standing aside while the bourgeoisie proceeded to fulfill its historic task of perfecting the Revolution in the classical pattern of Western Europe. Lenin disagreed. He correctly pointed out that in the era of Capitalist Imperialism, the stunted Russian bourgeoisie were incapable of, and could not be trusted to, carry out the task of the bourgeois revolution and continue to maintain a regime of political democracy in the face of the increasing demands and pressure of the proletariat. Only the proletariat, by overthrowing the bourgeois state and assuming the state power could safeguard the gains of the Revolution and carry it out to its logical Socialist conclusion. The Kornilov Rebellion which came within an ace of strangling the Revolution, gave emphasis and confirmation to Lenin's contention. Lenin proceeded to drive through his program for the revolutionary

conquest of power. The successful November Revolution crowned his efforts.

The November, Bolshevik Revolution, despite its working class trappings, and the political extinction of the bourgeoisie, and its political state was essentially a bourgeois revolution; a continuation of the first February Revolution. No amount of determination could have established a Socialist revolution in a backward country with unripe material and social conditions such as Russia represented. Lenin recognized the bourgeois limitations of the Russian Revolution. He pointed out that: "for a long time after the revolution the exploiters continue to enjoy a large number of practical advantages" over the proletariat.[15] "After the first Socialist revolution of the proletariat, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat *for a long time* remain *weaker* than the bourgeoisie. . . ."[16]

Lenin's recognition of the bourgeois character of the Russian Revolution did not prevent him from attempting through the medium of the Third International, to establish the "backward" Russian tactical pattern, as the standard mould for the advanced Socialist revolution. The economic and social weakness of the Russian proletariat and the relative economic superiority of the bourgeoisie weighed like an alp upon the brain of Lenin, and colored and distorted all his political reasoning in connection with the revolutionary problems of the advanced capitalist nations. Lenin failed to realize that the countries of Western Europe and the United States had *completed* their bourgeois revolutions, and that in these countries social development had rendered the capitalist class socially and economically superfluous and thereby *powerless* in their own right.[17] The reason the bourgeoisie in Russia had been able to continue so powerful AFTER its political defeat and extinction was precisely because in Russia the revolution

---

[15]The Proletarian Revolution and The Renegade, Kautsky, Pages 34, 35.

[16]"Left Wing," Communism, Page 52.

[17]"All social functions of the bourgeoisie are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist no longer has any social function but that of pocketing revenue, clipping coupons, and gambling on the stock exchange where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. If the capitalist mode of production first displaces the workers, it now displaces the capitalists and relegates them, like the workers, to the surplus population, if not immediately to the industrial reserve army."
Engels *Anti-Durhing*, Page 312

was a *bourgeois* revolution and not a Socialist revolution. Lenin made no tactical distinction between capitalism at its summit and capitalism at the bottom of its social development, and attempted to "straightjacket" the advanced Western proletariat into adherence to the bourgeois tactical policies of political compromise and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Leninism now stands revealed in its true light as a 20th century proletarian "revolutionary" form for the completion of the 19th century bourgeois revolution.

Through Leninism, traditional tactical Marxism won its greatest victory, and through the degeneration of Leninism it suffered its greatest defeat. The betrayal of the Social Democracy and the degeneration of Bolshevism—the two sides of the medal of traditional Marxism, marks the bankruptcy and the historic insufficiency of Marx's and Engels' tactical formulations in the epoch of the 20th century.

We are now in a position to understand the historical background of the bankruptcy of traditional Marxism. Compelled, by material and historical limitations, to become the involuntary executor of the uncompleted bourgeois revolution, organizational Marxism itself became bourgeosified; a victim so to speak of a process of social "Natural Selection." When in Germany and on the continent the Social-Democracy definitely aligned itself with the bourgeoisie and proceeded to suppress the proletarian revolution in blood; when in Soviet Russia the Stalinist regime murderously uprooted all proletarian traces left by the revolution, this was merely the bourgeois genius and essence of traditional, tactical Marxism triumphing over

[18]Although Leninism was a faithful 20th century preproduction of the traditional, tactical Marxism of the 19th century, Lenin's peculiar organizational concept of Democratic Centralism was purely his own, a product of the particular backward conditions prevailing in Russia. The Marx critics, in an attempt to discredit Marxism seek to ascribe the organizational concept of Democratic-Centralism to Marx. The fact of the matter is, however, that from the very first, outstanding Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg and Leon Trotsky opposed the Leninist concept of Democratic-Centralism as being contrary to the inherently democratic spirit that characterized Marx. Trotsky opposed Democratic-Centralism in the following prophetic language: "The organization of the party substitutes itself for the Party, the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization, and finally the dictator substitutes himself for the Central Committee." And so it has come to pass. Stalinism is among other things, the ripe fruit of Lenin's Democratic-Centralism. The fact that Trotsky subsequently accepted Democratic-Centralism does not invalidate the cogency of this reasoning or set aside its historical corroboration.

its proletarian forms.

The Proletariat as a Revolutionary Force

Having dissected the political philosophy of traditional Marxism and having demonstrated that its collapse can be traced directly to its incorrect theoretical foundations, the question arises: What, if anything, is left for the working class to do in this epoch of fascist counter-revolution?

The question has been raised: Has Marxism overestimated the revolutionary character of the proletariat? To answer this query it is first necessary to consider the background and nature of the proletariat's revolutionary character. The revolutionary character arises out of its peculiar position in capitalist society. In the *normal course,* class necessities force the proletariat onto the revolutionary course of supplanting capitalist society. Social evolution has provided the necessary material basis for the revolutionary transformation of society. But the social-historical process is by no means an instinctive-automatic one which spontaneously operates without the conscious intervention of the species as is the case in the field of natural evolution. The proletarian revolution must be the class conscious act of the proletariat itself. These are the very words of Marx. Nevertheless, Marx failed to understand the nature of Socialist consciousness, Socialist consciousness is not the spontaneous product of the class struggle—of the political movement and experience of the proletariat. As Kautsky pointed out, Socialist consciousness is separate and distinct from the proletarian class struggle and is first introduced into the proletarian class struggle by the bourgeoisie intelligentsia. Finally, Socialist consciousness is in no

---

"But Socialism arises side by side with the class struggle and not one out of the other; each arises out of different premises. Modern Socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of a profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition of production as, say, modern technology and the proletariat can create neither one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat but the *bourgeois intelligentsia*: It was out of the heads of the members of this stratum that Modern Socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn introduce it to the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arises from within it spontaneously." . . .

Karl Kautsky: Quoted by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done,* Page 40

sense inevitable, it must be consciously and deliberately acquired.

Marx drew a false analogy between revolutionary Bourgeois consciousness and Socialist consciousness. Bourgeois consciousness was an automatic, spontaneous reflex of the needs of bourgeois production. Responsive to these needs there grew up under Feudalism side by side with the growing system of bourgeois production, a spiritual superstructure of bourgeois ideology and culture which equipped the rising burghers with an independent class ideology and prepared it for the coming revolution. In the degree that the growing bourgeois production found itself handicapped and restricted by the trammels of feudal absolutism these restrictions translated themselves into a growing belief that the then existing feudal society was irrational and unnatural, a barrier to further social progress. Its destruction presented itself in the light of a natural and pressing social necessity. Equipped as the bourgeoisie was with a superior economic power and an independent class culture which from the very beginning freed it from any dependence upon the hostile feudal ideology, the victory of the bourgeois political revolution was historically inevitable. Such was the background and antecedents of revolutionary Bourgeois Consciousness.

Marx expected the pressure of social development to likewise generate a Socialist consciousness. But the social background of the proletariat was entirely different. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the proletariat entered upon the historical scene as a propertyless class, lacking an independent class ideology. Economically, the proletariat was an appendage of the bourgeoisie. Even if the proletariat was so inclined, it was as yet too weak and insignificant to challenge the bourgeoisie and wage an independent struggle against feudalism. But the proletariat had no choice, its class interests demanding that it ally itself with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against feudalism and for political democracy.

In the course of its historical dependance upon and joint association with the bourgeoisie, the proletariat acquired numerous bourgeois traditions and psychologically it was conditioned to accept the bourgeois regime as a classless, non-exploiting system; the best of all possible worlds. In short the proletariat became bourgeoisified just as in a previous social era in England the bourgeoisie succeeded in bourgeoisifying the feudal nobility. There was this vital difference

however: The Nobility was a ruling class and it took the bourgeoisie into partnership. The bourgeoisie were far from taking the proletariat into partnership! This process of bourgeoisification of the proletariat was aided by the fact that the bourgeoisie actually introduced political freedom and widespread public education and culture, and the further fact that the crowning characteristic of capitalist exploitation—wage slavery—was a masked process, actually appearing to the duped workers as consisting of full freedom of contract between two equal contracting parties.

Marx understood the retarding role that bourgeois traditions played: "The traditions of past generations weigh like an Alp upon the brain of man." However, both Marx and Engels underestimated the full force and effect of these bourgeois traditions. Engels wrote: "Tradition is a great retarding force, is the *vis inertae* of History but being merely passive is sure to be broken down. . . ." Engels was mistaken. Tradition has proven to be a far more potent factor in the mental subjugation of the proletariat than he had anticipated. Instead of breaking down in the course of capitalist development, capitalist traditions and inertia have strengthened their hold on the working class. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels exult in the fact that the bourgeoisie is compelled to educate the proletariat, thereby training their own grave diggers. Unfortunately, Marx and Engels here reckoned without their hosts. The education which the bourgeoisie supplied the workers with was BOURGEOIS education. It is precisely this education which conditioned the working class into voluntarily accepting the yoke of wage slavery. Moreover, the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary struggle against feudalism had a mighty ally in Science, which at the time was in rebellion against the restrictions imposed upon it by the feudal Catholic Church. The bourgeoisie also controlled the printing press, a most potent weapon in moulding favorable sentiment. Today the proletariat is confronted by a hostile science which has become a handmaiden of capitalism. The press, and lately the radio, from the very beginning has been a monopoly of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie thus control the most potent weapons for preventing the growth of Socialist consciousness.

Finally, not the least effective ally of Capitalism has been the Labor Leader, who, while ostensibly representing Labor is primarily

concerned with preserving Capitalism and its class rule at all costs. DeLeon has brilliantly characterized the Labor Leader "as a post of strategic strength for the capitalist class and of mischief for the proletariat." Also, a "masked battery in the ranks of Labor." To fully appreciate the enormous influence exercised by the Labor Leader in retarding the growth of Socialist consciousness we have only to look to Great Britain and the despicable role that the British Labor Leader and his Labor Party have played down to the present day, in derailing the periodical outbursts of class sentiment upon the part of the British workers. Here in our own country, Capitalism and its agents are fully aware of the strategic importance of this post. Our own Labor Leaders have not been backward in protecting the interests of their capitalist masters.[21]

Socialism:-A Historical Alternative

The diffusion of Socialist consciousness is the task of Socialist education and propaganda. This is not to deny or disparage the role that social development and the growing contradictions of capitalist production plays in breaking down the anti-Socialist prejudices of the proletariat and thus preparing the ground for the Socialist educator and propagandist. Social development plays an important role first in preparing the requisite material and social conditions for the

[21]The following extract from a recent article appearing in BARRONS', an authoritative Wall Street journal is highly informative:

"From the first the defense authorities have had little difficulty with the so-called top leaders of the Congress of Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor. Most of these leaders have "cooperated" not only with patriotic statements but also by giving moderating counsel to their organizers and members whenever they had an opportunity to do so. Some of the top officers of the unions have donated more time to mediation efforts in recent weeks than to fighting the cause of their members.

"But, for the most part union members had felt that they had justification for a strike and have ignored the pleas of leaders, in some cases they had actually defied them, and there was nothing the big chiefs could do about it.

"In view of these facts it is not too much to say that the strikes have had some aspects of a popular uprising directed against (1) the labor policies of individual firms concerned, (2) the Administration's let-us-all-sacrifice-for-defense policy, and (3) their own leadership.

"It is this aspect which is particularly disturbing to the administration and which makes the problem so difficult to handle. A government always can deal with a strongly led opposition—or revolt— to use a harsh word—by suppressing the leadership, or by buying it off with some sort of compromise. A movement from below is a different matter, especially when its adherents include thousands of church-going property owning citizens (as many strikers are).

Barrons, March 13, 1941, *Defense Strikes* by Stanley G. Thompson.

emergence of Socialist consciousness, secondly in its diffusion. However, this role is merely a negative one, of secondary importance.

We are now in a position to answer the question, "Has Marxism overestimated the revolutionary character of the proletariat?" Traditional Marxism erred in ascribing to the proletariat an inevitable revolutionary character *per se.* The proletariat is merely a potential revolutionary force. The proletarian revolution is by no means pre-destined.

"The determining factor of social progress," wrote DeLeon, "is the POSSIBILITY that the social stage offers for redress and emancipation." Writing more than thirty years ago, DeLeon with brilliant prescience illustrated the difference between possibility and inevitability by forecasting the success of the fascist counter-revolution, as an inescapable alternative, to the continued torpor and class indifference of the proletariat:

> "It does not follow that because the *capitalist* system works out its own downfall that therefore class rule will have ceased.
>
> "It may be a question whether we are now under the capitalist system proper. . . . Much may be said on the side of the theory that, if we are not yet under a different system, we are fast tending towards it. The downfall of capitalism from the causes indicated in the S. L. P. platform is by no means equivalent with the uprise of the Socialist Republic. Readers of The People are recommended to read the booklet *Two Pages From Roman History,* especially the first of "Two Pages" in the latter third of which this very subject is handled in detail. The country is now moving into a social system to which the name "Capitalism," in its proper sense is applying less and less. A monopoly period is now surging upward to which the designation "Plutocratic Feudalism" is the fitter term. It does not follow that if the very Few are gathered on the one side, and the very Many are lumped on the other, the latter will necessarily swamp the former. They will do so only when they have understood their own revolutionary mission, and have organized accordingly. Contrarywise—let the working class continue a sufficiently longer spell befuddled by the Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class; confused by the clatter of pure and simple political Socialists on the one side, and the shrieks

> of pure and simple physical Forcists, on the other; periodically swamped by floods of misinformation in regard to things and men; and perpetually the victims of such sinister characters as the "Man of the Furred Cap" in Eugenes Sue's master story, "The Iron Trevet;" and let those within or in the suburbs of the Movement who are neither labor lieutenants of the Capitalist Class, nor pure and simple politicians, nor pure and simple clubbists, nor spreaders of false information, nor yet "Men of the Furred Cap," persist in apathetic course of philosophically standing by and looking on, and fatuously expect things to straighten up, instead of contributing emphatic share towards order — then, whatever periods senseless (senseless because unrevolutionary and, therefore, merely riotous) upheavals may betide, the Many will sink to the depths of serfs, actual serfs of a plutocratic feudal glebe."[20]

That DeLeon was able, eight years before the outbreak of the First World War, to make this brilliant analysis of the background of the coming Fascist slavery is the most convincing and incontrovertible evidence of the scientific validity of Marxism. Here, too, we have a conclusive answer to the fulminations of the anti-Marxists who profess to see in the inability of Marx and Engels to forcast the advent of fascism an evidence of the bankruptcy of Marxism.

The objective course of capitalist society, and the now rapid disintegration of capitalist democracy has confirmed up to the hilt the invincibility of Scientific Marxism and its pivotal doctrine of the class struggle. No other social philosophy offers a solution for the paramount social question of our day. That Marx and Engels in their role of tacticians failed to accurately forecast the development of latter day capitalist society and the tempo of its development, is to be laid to the limited material conditions under which they labored and not to any inherent defect in Scientific Marxism. Marx and Engels were not magicians, they did not undertake to foretell the future by means of a crystal bowl. One may as well censure and disparage the astronomer Newton and his monumental scientific contributions because of his failure to discover the Einstein Law of Relativity, as condemn Marx and Engels for their inability, because of the incomplete development of capitalist

[20] *As to Politics*, Pages 107, 109 (1921 Edition)

production, to foresee the advent of fascism. Place Einstein back in the days of Newton subject to the limitation of that backward age and he never would have formulated the Law of Relativity. One may with equal justice sneer at and deprecate the achievements of the ancient Greek philosophers at whose head stood the mighty thinker, Aristotle, who by their original, theoretical scientific formulations laid the basis of all of modern industrial progress and development, because, these giant intellects were unable to *practically* develop their theoretical formulations, in the concrete form that we know today, e. g., the radio, automobile, airplane, etc., etc. The Greeks, brilliant as they were, and encyclopedic as was their knowledge were nevertheless the creatures of their age and could not overcome the barriers created by the limited material development of their day. Marx, like Aristotle, could not rise above the material limitations of his day.

The Basic Power in Society

A successful program of proletarian tactics must above all eschew the errors of traditional Marxism and its political representatives, the Social-Democracy and Leninism. The basic error and weakness of these movements was their misconception of the nature of the Socialist revolution. For them the basic problem of the Socialist revolution was in the last analysis political. Both considered political power and its military embodiment as the superior force of society. This fallacy reflected the limited bourgeois character of traditional Marxism which was itself a political product of the uncompleted bourgeois revolution.

The bourgeois revolution was primarily a political revolution. When the bourgeoisie challenged the political domination of Feudalism they were already in possession of and control of the dominant forces of production. However, the political institutions of feudal society hemmed in and restricted the full and free development of bourgeois production. For bourgeois production to obtain full freedom of development and growth it was necessary to destroy these political trammels. Hence the essential political character of the bourgeois revolution. The political requirements of the bourgeois

revolution became a fetish with traditional Marxism. In the Social-Democracy this fetishism manifested itself in a political philosophy of reformist-gradualism which looked upon the conquest of power as a process of gradual, legislative enactment and enfoldment and denied the necessity of a revolutionary transformation of the capitalist political state. In Leninism, this fetishism took the form of elevating the dictatorship of the proletariat into a universal proletarian tactic, irrespective of prevailing material and social conditions.

In criticising the political fetishism of traditional Marxism we are not to be understood as denying the necessity of political action as a tactic of the proletarian revolution. The abolition of the capitalist state machinery is inescapably a political task and is an indispensible pre-requisite for the introduction of Socialism. Anarchism or Syndicalism, which denies the necessity of political action, is after the tragic experience of bleeding Spain, not only theoretically but practically bankrupt. Nevertheless, the basic character of the proletarian revolution is *economic* and not political.

Engels in his classic work *Anti-Durhing* which is second only to *Capital* in the literature of Marxism points out that it is economic power that is the basic force in society and that political power is merely an attribute of economic power and must give way to a superior economic power.

Wrote Engels:

> "But where—apart from cases of conquest—the internal public force of a country stands in opposition to its economic development, as at a certain stage has occurred with almost every political power in the past, the conquest has always ended with the downfall of the political power. Inexorably and without exception the economic revolution has forced its way through. . . ." [23]

The victory of the politically oppressed burghers over the feudal nobility and their state power, ("in political rank the nobleman was

[23] "Therefore, here at least the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element. . . ." ". . . The consciousness of the inter-connection between this political struggle (for the conquest of power, A. Z.) and its economic roots becomes dulled and can be lost altogether." Engels *Ludwig Feuerbach,* Pages 62, 64 (International Publishers).

everything and the burgher nothing") was due to the burghers superior economic power which flowed from bourgeois production based upon industry as opposed to feudal production based upon land. "*Economic* power," writes Engels, "was the decisive weapon of the burghers in this struggle against the feudal lords."

While Marx and Engels understood and emphasized the basic importance of economic power and its paramount role as a revolutionary force they were prevented by the backward material and social conditions of their time, which led to their pre-occupation with the problem of completing the bourgeois revolution, from consciously realizing that the decisive weapon of the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie was its superior economic power. It remained for Daniel DeLeon, product of the full-orbed 20th century capitalist development, to cut the navel string that still tied the proletarian revolution to the bourgeois revolution, by formulating a scientific tactical program for proletarian emancipation in keeping with the advanced conditions of the 20th century. DeLeon pointed out, that while unlike the revolutionary burghers, the proletariat was propertyless and appeared upon the historical scene as an appendage of the capitalist class, at first blush a very unpromising social force, it was not destined to be a stepchild of history. The smithy of social evolution has wrought mightily for the proletariat. The exigencies of capitalist production compel the capitalists to educate, train aand organize the proletariat into disciplined, industrially-ranked batallions, thereby equipping it with the necessary power to carry out the Socialist transformation of society. In the degree that social development displaces the capitalist class from industry, rendering them superfluous and thereby economically powerless, the operation and control of industry passes to the proletariat. To be sure as long as the proletariat continues to recognize capitalist ownership and voluntarily accepts the domination of the capitalist political state this control and operation is exercised in the interests of the capitalist class. But capitalist ownership rests upon a legal fiction and has no more potency in itself than an international treaty has. Once the workers become politically class conscious and organize their superior economic power into integrally organized industrial unions, the capitalist state and with it the capitalist mode of production is doomed. Nothing can stand up before the overwhelming power of a consciously organized working class.

A Scientific 20th Century Program

The component elements of DeLeon's tactical program demand separate and independent treatment which will be forthcoming. For the purposes of this essay we are presenting a brilliant summary of DeLeonism by Louis Frania who broke with DeLeon politically, becoming a Leninist:

> (1) "Industrial Unionism, organized in harmony with the mechanism of concentrated capitalist production, is the condition sine-qua-non of the revolutionary movement. Mere Industrial Unionism, however, is insufficient; it must be revolutionary industrial unionism.
>
> (2) "By means of Industrial Union organization the workers can secure all the immediate betterments they require—immediate reforms which gained by means of the power of the workers through mass strikes, constitute steps toward the final goal, develop the integrity and self reliance of the proletariat and, prepare it for its historic mission.
>
> (3) "The movement should not deal in political reforms of this character which benefit the middle class and the aristocracy of labor almost exclusively and will be yielded by the ruling class itself—a theory now proven by Capitalist Progressivism. (And today, further proven and up to the hilt, by the Roosevelt New Deal.) Political reform is a menace to the integrity of the revolutionary movement.
>
> (4) "The socialist political movement is purely agitational; its mission is not constructive politics, but to lash onward the bourgeoisie parties by an aggressive policy, warm into life the revolutionary spirit of the workers and, courageously develop the necessary sentiment for revolutionary industrial unionism. Only upon this basis is political action justifiable. The goal of the revolutionary movement is the overthrow of political government which means the overthrow of all class rule—the substitution of industrial representation for territorial representation, industrial administration for political government. Industral Unionism not only organizes for the every day struggles but prepares for the structure of the future society, or-

ganizes the Socialist State within the Capitalist State, ready to assume control of society. In other words the revolutionary act will be performed by the industrially organized proletariat; and Industrial Unionism will not only be the most powerful force in overthrowing capitalist society but will constitute the basis of the Socialist Society of the future." [24]

A Challenge to Scoffers

We know that there are those, victims of ingrained prejudices and past organizational associations, who will reject this program out of hand as impractical and visionary. We will be told that the workers will have no truck with revolutionary, Scientific Marxism and its tactical program of the uncompromising class struggle. We will be told that revolutionary, Scientific Marxism is destined to continue a "voice in the wilderness," a utopian dream. Yes, comrades. But what have *you* to offer as a practical alternative? It is well to reject and discard traditional, "orthodox" Marxism. BUT WHAT THEN? Many who are among the foremost in thus rejecting "orthodox" Marxism fail to comprehend that they are thereby condemning themselves and the course that they have pursued. The failure of traditional Marxism is the failure of the tactical policies of political compromise, reformism (both the Social-Democratic and the Leninist revolutionary version) and of gradualism and its reverse of the medal, the idealized "bourgeois" proletarian dictatorship of the proletariat. These tactics are of the essence of traditional Marxism. These people, while condemning "orthodox Marxism," blithely continue to practice its very policies which have failed! They continue to talk of the necessity of revising and re-examining Marxism and of bringing it up to date. Again we ask: BUT HOW? What would they reject? It is not revolutionary Scientific Marxism and its tactics of the uncompromising class struggle and the revolutionary transformation (we do not mean violent) of the capitalist state into a classless Industrial administration with the Union as the government, which have failed, for nowhere in the capitalist world has this program been followed by the proletariat. Today the Marxist doctrine of the uncompromising class struggle and its corollary, the

[24] *The New Review*, July, 1914.

revolutionary transformation of the capitalist state stand forth unassailable; as completely confirmed by historical developments.

Who will dare to deny that the only perspective continued capitalism can offer the workers is one of bloody, fascist repression? In the face of this unavoidable and inescapable perspective to continue to trod the same old path of compromise, reformism and gradualism which led the European working class to their fascist doom is, to put it mildly, the height of political stupidity and bankruptcy; it is to permit ingrained prejudices to blind one to the lessons taught by the failure and bankruptcy of traditional Marxism.

Whether or not the workers continue to remain deaf to the appeal of Scientific Marxism, its revolutionary program still remains the only alternative to IMMEDIATE fascist enslavement.

The fact that DeLeonism has failed to assume significant proportions within the Socialist movement does not militate against DeLeon's contributions. In a measure this failure was due to the peculiar conditions of the American movement and, since DeLeon's death to the anti-DeLeonist economic policies of the epigone S. L. P., which has repulsed militant, class conscious workers everywhere. It should be remembered, however, that the tactical policies of the Social-Democracy and Leninism have been extensively practiced and found wanting, whereas the policies of scientific DeLeonism have for all intents and purposes remained untried.

Those who mistakenly believe that re examination and re-evaluation mean the developing of "short-cuts" and magic formulas to lure the working class to emancipation are doomed to disappointment. Scientific Socialism can never be a religion, which guarantees and makes certain the victory of Socialism. All that Marxism can do is to chart the course and to provide the proletariat with the necessary intellectual tools with which to accomplish the task of revolutionary reconstruction. This it has done. Now it is for the working class to make a conscious choice between the freedom of socialism and the slavery of fascism.

Marxism says to the working class: Hic Rhodus, Hic Salta.[25] More than that it cannot do.

---

[25]Here is Rhodes; leap here.

WAR AND THE WORKERS

Once more the Socialist movement is being tested in the crucible of war. Once more we have the camp of Social-patriotism, which proclaims this to be a workingman's war and calls upon the working-class to surrender and abandon the uncompromising class struggle position and render full support to the ruling class regime. And at the opposite pole we have the camp of traditional Marxism, which denounces the present war as an inter-imperialist war, a continuation of the 1914-18 conflict; the outcome of which is a matter of equal indifference to the proletariat. Traditional Marxism urges a policy of instransigent opposition to all phases of the war.

MODERN SOCIALISM rejects both of these positions as untenable.

I

It is quite true that the present conflict has its roots in the 1914-18 imperialist war. But the present war represents a qualitative difference which has converted it into a predominantly social as opposed to imperialist struggle. Nazi Germany, unlike Imperial Germany, seeks to replace the existing capitalist "free" world market based upon "free" labor, with an enforced totalitarian slave economy. Nazi Germany, unlike Imperialist Germany, envisions all of Europe as a colonial hinterland of a super German Empire.

A cardinal tenet in the Nazi philosophy is a system of compound "master race" enslavement for all non-German people. Finally, Nazi Germany is the self proclaimed enemy of all culture. Unquestionably, a Nazi triumph in the present war would be the greatest catastrophe humanity has ever known. A Nazi victory would mean a new historical dark age for the European working class with inescapable repercussions for the American working class.

The future of Socialism, of Humanity, the very continued existence of civilization makes imperative the destruction of the Hitler-Nazi regime.

II

Starting with the above premise what should be the attitude of the revolutionary Socialist movement to the present war? Should the working class "suspend" the class struggle and support the "Democratic"-Capitalist war regime as a lesser evil to a Nazi victory? (This doctrine of the "lesser evil" has received wide support in circles that opposed the 1914-18 conflict as imperialistic.) The answer to this question must be an emphatic no! In the first place, it is a misnomer to speak of a "Democratic"-Capitalist lesser evil. There does not exist and there can be no "Democratic"- Capitalist lesser evil to Nazism. A true democratic victory over the Nazi regime can only be part and parcel of the basic class struggle against International Capitalism. The struggle against Fascism can not be separated from, or carried on independently of, the class struggle. The two are inseparably interwoven. In the struggle against Fascism, native as well as foreign, the working class can abandon the doctrine of the class struggle and embrace class collaboration only at its peril.

There are fundamental differences between the proletarian class struggle against Hitlerism and the "Democratic"- Capitalist war against the Hitler-Nazi regime. British-American Imperialism's war is not directed against *Hitlerism*, but rather at a rival ruling class regime which threatens its selfish class interests. Theirs is not a principled struggle against Fascism but rather an opportunist and transitory conflict for world power and aggrandizement.

As a consequence, British-American Capitalism can not be trusted to carry on a RELIABLE struggle against Nazism. If on the morrow circumstances were to change and the interests of British-American Capitalism were to so dictate, it would not hesitate to come to terms with Hitler, betraying the struggle against the Nazi regime without compunction. This is precisly what happened in France, and the action of the French bourgeoisie is in no manner

peculiarly French. These gentry acted in accordance with *their* class interests. British-American Capitalism's war against the Nazi regime is decidely not a workingman's war.

Not only cannot British-American Capitalism be relied upon to carry out a principled struggle against Hitlerism, but with the best intention in the world, "Democratic"-Capitalism would be incapable of defeating its Nazi, totalitarian rival. The military superiority that the Hitler regime has thus far established flows from its integrated totalitarian economy. Modern total war can only be carried on successfully by means of a thoroughly centralized and integrated economy. Here is where the Nazi regime shines over its British-American rivals. Although the British and American economic systems have achieved a large measure of centralization and integration, they are still primarily a laissez-faire economy, based upon the free movement of labor and the rights of private capital. This capitalist "free" economy is the direct antithesis of the superior totalitarian economy. Only by converting its "free" economy into totalitarian economy with rigid controls over labor and industry, can "Democratic"-Capitalism hope to vanquish the Nazi military forces. This is clearly understood in both countries where giant strides on the road to totalitarianism have been made.

III

Here is the rub for our "lesser evil" proponents. Once "Democratic"-Capitalism statifies its economy and adopts rigid totalitarian curbs, it in turn becomes totalitarian, it is no longer democratic. Thus, support of the regime of "Democratic"-Capitalism as the "lesser evil" leads directly to a *native* brand of totalitarianism. The very war regime which is being built to defeat the Nazi Government dooms "Democratic"-Capitalism and its "free" economy and "free" labor movement. This is denied. It is contended that the loss of democratic rights and the establishment of a totalitarian dictatorship here is merely temporary, a passing phase of the war crisis. Once victory is won and the danger is removed, "Democratic"-Capitalism will resume its rule with full vitality. We are referred to the historical example of the 1917 war, at which time

civil liberties were also suspended. However, at the close of the war, civil liberties were restored and "Democratic"-Capitalism resumed its rule in full vigor. The analogy limps. The two sets of circumstances and conditions involved are fundamentally different. The 1914-18 conflict was not a total war, embracing a revolution in the economic, political and social order. The restrictions imposed at that time, however salutary to the war effort were merely grafted on to the existing order and capable of being removed by administrative or legislative action. At the close of the last war British and American Imperialism, having disposed of their German rival, emerged in an advantageous position, considerably strengthened. The "Democratic"-Capitalist regime was in a position to continue with its old forms of rule and operation unimpaired. Furthermore, both countries at that time possessed enormous powers of recuperation. The situation is entirely changed today. It is conceded that the war will be a long-drawn out war of attrition and at the close, even if Britain is victorious it will find itself completely exhausted economically and bankrupted financially. This victory, while eliminating the rivalry of the dangerous Nazi regime will not eliminate the economic and social contradictions which gave rise to Fascism and the war in the first place. Years of total war will only serve to intensify those contradictions. To retain its class regime the British capitalists will be compelled to tighten their dictatorial rule instead of relaxing it.

A remarkable picture of the actual process of transformation of Great Britain from a democratic country to a totalitarian one, which is now going on, is supplied by George Orville a left-wing political publicist who is supporting the Churchill Government as a "lesser evil."

> "Laissez-faire capitalism is dead in England and can't revive unless the war ends within the next few months. Centralized ownership and planned production are bound to come. The whole question is who is to be in control. The recent rightward swing means that we are being regimented by wealthy men and aristocrats rather than by representatives of the common people. They will use their power to keep the structure of Government on a class basis, manipulate taxation and rationing in their own favor, and avoid a revolu-

tionary war strategy; but not to return to capitalism of the old chaotic kind."

The "lesser evil" policy helps to create the very totalitarian forms which it sets out to avoid. "Democratic"-Capitalism is irrevocably doomed; any contention to the contrary being mere wishful thinking.

The rejection of the "lesser-evil" policy of class collaboration does not necessarily call for a position of intransigent opposition to all phases of the war. The fact that the war is aimed at the rival Hitler-Nazi ruling class clique and not against Nazism does not change the consequences of a Nazi victory. Least of all does it justify the Leninist policy of revolutionary defeatism and its companion slogan: Turn the Imperialist War into a Civil War.

Revolutionary defeatism calls for the military defeat of the home government as the "lesser evil" to its victory. It is contended that the victory of the home bourgeoisie will strengthen its political position and consolidate its power over the working class, thus retarding the proletarian revolution. On the other hand, we are told, the defeat of the home bourgeoisie, by weakening its position facilitates the development of the proletarian revolution. Concretely the position of revolutionary defeatism finds expression not only in political opposition to the war, under the slogan of "Turn the Imperialist War into a Civil War," but also in the carrying out of a series of working class economic sanctions aimed at retarding the production and transportation of war materials. This Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism is a product of the peculiar, backward social conditions that existed in feudal Russia at the outbreak of the 1914 war. Czarist Russia was, in the words of Lenin: "The most reactionary and barbarous government oppressing the greatest number of nations and populations of Europe and Asia." A military defeat of the Czarist regime would result in its disintegration and prepare the ground for the victory of the Revolution. On the other hand, the victory of Czarism, once more in the language of Lenin, would:

> ". . . bring with it a strengthening of world reaction, a strengthening of reaction inside the country and will be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the people in the regions already seized. In view of this the defeat of Russia appears to be the lesser evil under all circumstances."

Hence the policy of revolutionary defeatism, i. e., working for the military defeat of the Czarist regime.

The attempt to apply this policy of revolutionary defeatism under the entirely different circumstances of the present war is nothing short of political lunacy, tantamount to the working class committing political suicide. The contention that military reverses of the home government leads to greater revolutionary opportunities is wholly fallacious. The cases of Belgium, Poland, Norway, France and Holland have proven that the victorious Nazi legions, far from "improving" revolutionary opportunities lose no time in exterminating whatever has remained of the "free" labor movement after their entry. Nazi Germany is not Imperial Germany which permitted the Bolshevik Government to continue to exist, for its own reasons, notwithstanding the fact that it had the military power to wipe it out. To talk of a successful Socialist revolution *after* the Nazi barbarians have succeeded in invading a particular country, barring a general Nazi military defeat, constitutes revolutionary romanticism of the nth degree. It denotes the same fallacious and wishful reasoning that led the German Communist party to greet the advent of the Hitler regime in Germany as a step forward to proletarian revolution.

IV

The Leninist slogan of "Turn The Imperialist War Into A Civil War" must also be rejected. It is a product of conspiratorial conditions. It represents the essence of revolutionary intoxication completely ignoring political realities. We are told by the Leninists that this Civil War slogan embodies the only correct war position. It was in this spirit that Lenin attacked Rosa Luxemburg's famous Junius pamphlet (The Crisis in the Social-Democracy). Lenin condemned Luxemburg's formulations of the war position because she inferentially rejected the Civil War slogan. Paul Forlich,** Luxemburg's biographer, summarized the difference in the two positions in the following language:

> "Rosa Luxemburg spoke only of the class struggle and not of revolution and Civil War, whereas Lenin firmly insisted on Civil War and revolution in all his utterances."

** "Rosa Luxemburg" page 240.

It was this that Lenin objected too. Lenin wrote:[3]

> "The revolution was on the order of the day in the years 1914-16, it was hidden in the womb of the war, it was *growing* out of the war. This the revolutionary class should have proclaimed in its name, this program should have been fearlessly and ceaselessly propagated; Socialism is impossible, in a period of war, without Civil War against the arch revolutionary, criminal bourgeoisie that condemns the people to unspeakable suffering."

We do not dispute that the revolution continues to be on the order of the day. But revolutions are not created by simply urging Civil War irrespective of conditions. The Junius pamphlet, in advance, made the best possible refutation of Lenin's position.

> "But what action should the party have taken to give our opposition to the war and to our war demands weight and emphasis? Should we have proclaimed a general strike? Should it have called upon the soldiers to refuse military service? This is the question generally asked. To answer with a simple yes or no were just as ridiculous as to decide, "When the war breaks out we will start a revolution. Revolutions are not made and movements of the people are not produced according to technical recipes (or slogans, Ed.) that repose in the pockets of the party leaders. . . . The success of great popular movements depends, aye, the very time and circumstance of their inception is decided by a number of economic, political and psychological factors. The existing degree of tension between the masses, the degree of intelligence of the masses and the degree of the ripeness of their spirit of resistance. All these factors which are incalculable, are premises that cannot be artificially created by any party."*

To counsel Civil War is to declare *actual* war against capitalism, and this at a time when the revolutionary movement consists literally of a handful, with the proletariat en masse supporting capitalism. It is to voluntarily relinquish the still remaining substantial rights of democratic freedom and the right to carry on a revolutionary agitation against capitalism. The proletariat has

---

[3] "On The Junius Phamphlet" *Labour Monthly*, 1935, Page 117.
* *Crisis In The Social Democracy* page 109.

no need of Civil War to establish Socialism, and the Democratic-Socialist movement cannot create a revolution *behind* the backs and against the desire of the working class. In the class struggle, Civil War will be the recourse of the disgruntled ex-capitalist class who, expropriated by the proletariat, will have recourse to a "pro-slavery" rebellion. For the proletariat to raise the artificial slogan of Civil War is to play directly into the hands of the reaction and disarm itself.

V

In rejecting the policy of revolutionary defeatism the revolutionary Socialist in this war must also reject along with it its tactic of imposing working class economic sanctions aiming at the crippling of the war effort. We cannot do Mr. Hitler the favor of giving him a clear field for victory. However, this policy of refusing to cripple the economic effort of American capitalism in the present war does not call for a "suspension" of the class war on the economic field. The class struggle on the economic field is waged, not to cripple or curtail capitalist production but to protect labor against the never ceasing encroachments of the capitalist exploiters, and procure for it its full market value. The struggle against the Hitler regime in no manner obviates the necessity for carrying on this struggle.

In fact, the capitalist exploiters despite their fake call to National Unity have intensified THEIR class struggle against Labor. Under cover of the hypocritical cry of National Defense they are attempting to deprive Labor of its own, vital defense weapon, i. e., the strike, and are at the same time seeking to burden the workers with the lion's share of the war-costs while they themselves are coining fabulous war profits. As part of this insidious campaign a tremendous hue and cry has been raised against "defense" strikes as being responsible for a serious curtailment of war production. But this is merely a variation of the pickpocket's trick of diverting attention from himself by shouting "thief." The responsibility for the curtailment of war production rests directly upon the shoulders of the capitalists themselves, and can be traced to their insatiable greed for profit even at the

expense of their own vital class defense. In practically every instance, the demands of the "defense" strikers were modest to a fault (taking into consideration the rapidly rising cost of living and the enormous war-profits their employers are reaping). In an effort to avoid delaying war production the unions carried on protracted negotiations and made substantial concessions. But in vain. The employers wanted the strikes. They deliberately goaded Labor on, sensing a golden opportunity to besmirch unionism and tar it with the odium of sabotaging the "National Defense," thereby freeing themselves from irksome union "interference." At the same time, strikes in defense industries would supply a likely excuse for outlawing all strikes. So blatant has become the "blitzkrieg" of the industrialists against labor that such old-line, reactionary labor fakirs as President William Green and New York State President James Lyons whose loyalty to capitalism and its interests may not be questioned, have felt themselves called upon to denounce this anti-labor campaign.*

Labor's militant waging of the class struggle on the economic field need not substantially hamper war production. The real bottleneck is to be found in the archaic capitalist system of production itself and the capitalists' inordinate greed for profit. Steel and aluminum productivity have been far below requirements. Yet up to a very short time ago, or for over the period of a year, these two industries successfully resisted all attempts to expand their plant productivity on the grounds that such increased productivity would be ruinous to peacetime profits. A magnificent exhibition of continuing to wage the class struggle on the economic field in the face of a hysterical campaign of capitalist opposition, is the case of the aircraft workers. The social-patriotic apologists of capitalism bitterly denounced the aircraft workers for refusing to submit to the industrial autocracy of the aircraft magnates, and accused the workers of sabotaging "National Defense" by daring to strike. Actually, as a result of a few short and strategically waged strikes the back of industrial autocracy in the aircraft field has been broken, and hundreds of thousands of aircraft workers will benefit by increased wages and improved working conditions. Yet the loss in production occasioned thereby was but a small fraction

* See Proceedings of 1941 New York State A. F. of L. Convention.

of the loss entailed when the aircraft industry itself went on a sit-down strike against a governmental attempt to limit its fabulous profits. As a result of this sit-down strike of several months duration in the spring of 1940, production of aircraft for domestic defense was virtually at a standstill. Yet their was no hysterical outcry on the part of the capitalist press against these real saboteurs of war production.

For Labor to yield to the war-crisis blackmail of the capitalist class and voluntarily surrender its own vital defense weapon, the strike, is NOT to aid in the war effort against the Nazi regime, but quite the contrary, to prepare the ground for a native totalitarian regime *here.* If the capitalist class is really sincere in its desire for uninterrupted war production it can readily obtain this by desisting from its campaign of destruction against the Labor movement and paying the full market value of present-day labor-power. But we have no illusions on this score. We know our capitalists, and where their true interests lie. No more than the leopard can change his spots will, or can, the capitalists defer their class struggle against Labor. Labor has no other alternative in self-defense but to follow suit.

VI

Finally, MODERN SOCIALISM categorically rejects the slogan, "The Main Enemy is At Home." To apply this slogan literally at the present time is to deprive it of its real substance. This particular slogan was given currency by Karl Liebknecht in the 1914-18 war, as a rallying cry against the falsifications of the German Imperialism to the effect that not it but the Russian Tsar was responsible for the war. In that connection the slogan was correctly employed. Be that as it may, this slogan is purely agitational and as such has its limitations. Actually, today the main enemy is World Fascism, both in its matured state abroad and in its formative stage at home. The war itself is only incidental to this main struggle and, indeed its chief significance lies in its accelerative effect on the spread and growth of the Fascist plague. The working class must take the offensive against Fascism on all fronts, both at home and abroad.

VII

Socialists are not indifferent to the fate of their country and will not actively or passively surrender it to the invading Nazi hordes. In the event of a Nazi invasion the revolutionary Socialist must join in the defense of the Nation. If at that time the proletariat still continues to reject the Socialist alternative, and the defense of the Nation is undertaken by the capitalist regime, then the revolutionary Socialist has no choice but to join this defense. This duty is not changed by the fact that the only alternative that capitalism can offer to a Nazi victory and its compound "master-race" slavery is a native brand of its own totalitarianism.

This position of refusing to abandon the Nation to the tender mercies of the Nazi invader will bring us afoul of both the "super-super" revolutionists and the social patriots. The revolutionary defeatists will lose no time in exclaiming: Aha, a miserable masquerade to cover up with revolutionary phrases the counter-revolutionary action of succumbing to capitalist patriotism. At the other end of the pole, the social-patriots, smarting under the condemnation of their class collaborationist tactics, will jeeringly accuse us of inconsistency and revolutionary romanticism. Both camps will unite in pointing to the incongruousness of a position which accepts the defense of the country and yet rejects and condemns "National Unity." We will be told: If the workers are really concerned in the defense of their country why wait for actual invasion to come to its aid? Why not join immediately in supporting its defense by cooperating with the program of National Unity? And after all, is not the offensive the best defense? To defeat Hitler in Europe would eliminate the possibility of a Nazi invasion. Such is the burden of their refrain.

Our opponents, and the objections that they raise, merely beg the question. They gratuitously take for granted the very premises involved in the discussion. They confuse Capitalist Imperialism and its selfish class interests with the NATION as a whole. Capitalism and its ruling class regime is by no means synonymous with patriotism and Nationality. True enough, the capitalist class

would have us believe that its ruling class regime is identical in interest with the Nation as a whole. But we cannot do Messrs. Capitalists this "small" favor. It is for the social-patriots to first prove that the interests of Capitalism are identical with the interests of the Nation as a whole, before they can accuse MODERN SOCIALISM of inconsistency of revolutionary romanticism in refusing to whitewash American Imperialism and become its faithful lackey under the guise of "National Unity." And let the revolutionary defeatists who reject our program as a masquerade show how their alternative policy of revolutionary defeatism, which calls for the victory of the foreign invader as the "lesser evil," can have any objective result other than expediting the victory of the Nazi invaders and their regime of "master-race" slavery!

The revolutionary Socialist wages the unrelenting class struggle up to an actual invasion, because any other course is to abandon in advance the historic mission of the working class and to condemn it to totalitarian enslavement without hope for the future; it is to desert the field at the height of the battle. In joining in repelling a Nazi invasion, revolutionary Socialists bow to a recognition of hard realities. The working class having rejected the salvation of Democratic-Socialism, the defense of the Nation then becomes synonymous with the interests of the capitalist class, to whom it has been entrusted by default.

VIII

There is yet another war program to consider, the program of bourgeois pacifism and its slogan of a negotiated peace at all costs. This program, while it is essentially bourgeois in character, is nevertheless the central point in the war programs of the British Independent Labor Party and the Socialist Party here in America, under the leadership of Norman Thomas. A negotiated peace is presented as the only practical method of preserving Democracy by calling a halt to the alarming movement towards totalitarian controls and a fascist regime. A negotiated peace as a "breathing spell' for democracy is a contradiction in terms. A negotiated peace once it was established would immediately raise the problem of competition with a Nazi-dominated Europe and its

totalitarian slave economy. A negotiated peace would not eliminate Nazi ambitions for world conquest and the menace of a Hitler invasion of the Western Hemisphere. In the name of meeting the competition of the Nazi slave regime, and of providing an adequate hemisphere defense, the American people would be called upon to voluntarily submit to increasing totalitarian controls. Once more we arrive at the blind alley of "Democratic"-Capitalism. To subdue Nazi totalitarianism, it must itself assume totalitarian hues, shedding its democratic form. Finally, the bankruptcy of the slogan of a negotiated peace is revealed by the fact that such a peace can at best be only a temporary armed truce. Within five or ten years at the most, Nazi totalitarianism would be in a position to challenge American Imperialism in a third and climactic war for world supremacy.

The slogan of a negotiated peace is a snare and a delusion. It can bring no peace but a sham peace and serves to blind the working class to a recognition of the character of the war and the class nature of capitalism. Now, in the era of decadent capitalism, more than than ever before is bourgeois pacifism and its concept of a just and lasting peace within the framework of capitalism, completely bankrupt in theory and in practice. To advocate a negotiated peace is to deny in practice the theoretical truth that fascism is the inescapable by-product of decadent Capitalism.

IX

Having in turn rejected the war programs of Social-Democracy and its social-patriotism, of bourgeois pacifism and its sham slogan of a negotiated peace, and finally Leninism with its revolutionary defeatism, what specific war program has MODERN SOCIALISM to offer? For, as Rosa Luxemburg once wrote: Passive fatalism can never be the role of a revolutionary party like the Social Democracy. It must neither place itself at the disposal of the existing class state under the command of the ruling class, nor can it stand silently by until the storm is passed."

There is only one correct war program: THE IMMEDIATE ABOLITION OF CAPITALISM AND ITS CLASS RULE

REGIME. There can be no intermediate, half-way measures, no "immediate" demands short of the abolition of Capitalism itself. In the struggle against Fascism there is only one sure weapon: The unrelenting class struggle; No Compromise, No Cooperation with "Democratic" Capitalism. "Democratic"-Capitalism cannot be relied upon to crush Fascism; and could not do it if it would, without going Fascist itself. Only Socialism can destroy Fascism. In this country we have a group of Marxist intellectuals under the banner of the *Partisan Review* who have remained true to the cause of revolutionary Socialism, and who, while recognizing the necessity of conducting an unrelenting class struggle against the war, have nevertheless raised a program of reformist "immediate" war demands, calling for "the greatest possible mass participation in the leadership and guidance of the state, referenda upon crucial issues, working class control of economic planning, public diplomacy, democratization of the army, equality for negroes, etc., etc."

At the same time, a number of "leftist" lesser-evil proponents in England have raised the cry of waging a "revolutionary" war against Hitlerism, upon the basis of a "liberalized" capitalist state. Such a program is a contradiction in terms. The present decadent capitalist society and its state apparatus is incapable structurally and organically of waging a revolutionary-progressive war. The *Partisan Review* frankly concedes that the "immediate" war demands that it raises "are by their very nature an attack upon the existing social order and it is inconceivable that Churchill or Roosevelt could or would grant them." This being so, then what is the practical objective to be gained in raising these demands? To attempt to "smuggle" these demands into capitalism would be tantamount to a program of shamefaced reformism and a negation of the Marxist concept of the capitalist state as a class organ and the need for its revolutionary transformation. Wherein does the raising of these demands further the struggle against capitalism and its product, fascism? Under the best possible light, the raising of these demands can only serve to obscure and confuse the real issue and plays directly into the hands of bourgeois pacifism, which raises precisely the same demands in the spirit of reformist-gradualism and as a *substitute* for the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society.

X

We know in advance that our war program calling for the immediate abolition of Capitalism will be rejected as "impractical" and we put down as Don Quixotes tilting at windwills. But there is nothing so impractical as our "practical" social patriots. We have seen how *their* practical program of the "lesser evil" leads inevitably to native totalitarian slavery. It is not necessary for the working class to embrace the yoke of native totalitarianism to encompass the defeat of Nazism. Democratic-Socialism, without surrendering democracy, nay, by bringing democratic forms and material well-being to the highest levels yet reached by man, can defeat Fascism not only in Europe but here in the United States.

In the same degree that a totalitarian economy is superior to a capitalist "free" economy, a Socialist economy "carried on by freely associated men and consciously regulated in accordance with a settled plan," (Marx) towers over a totalitarian economy. The Nazi economy is a product of hodge-podge efforts, limited by political considerations which prevented a broad sweep and lacks a truly scientific basis. Moreover, it is based upon slave labor. Superficially, the Nazis have succeeded in suppressing the class struggle and establishing virtually uninterrupted production. But beneath the surface the class struggle still smoulders on with serious effects on the total volume and quality of production. A totalitarian regime based upon cowed and enslaved workers cannot possibly compete with a Socialist regime based upon "freely associated producers."

"Politically," a Socialist regime would be infinitely stronger than the Nazi regime. This is a consideration of the greatest importance in the present conflict. It is recognized by military experts that a successful military offensive against Hitler cannot be realized solely upon the basis of manpower and equipment, but must include a *psychological* offensive against Nazi home morale as well. The black record of British Imperialism, its foisting of the Versailles treaty on the German people, disqualifies it in advance from carrying on any kind of an effective psychological campaign aimed at the German masses. One of the Nazis'

greatest sources of strength has been the hypocritical democratic pretentions of British Imperialism in contrast to their imperialist conduct. Hitler has with good effect declaimed against the International Bankers who are seeking to involve the whole world in their "interest slavery." The political stupidity of British Imperialism in openly avowing its intention to destroy the German nation and "police" the German people has been worth a dozen military victories to Hitler who has exploited it to the utmost in maintaining home morale.

On the other hand, a Socialist regime coming as it would with "clean hands," and proving in deeds the sincerity of its professions, would be able to wage a powerful and effective psychological offensive against Nazi morale which no amount of Nazi demagogy would be able to counteract. It would make the defeat of the Nazi regime inevitable.

In the face of the foregoing we are quite content to let our readers judge as to who are the real Don Quixotes of the 20th century.

In the short time that is still left, it is the duty of all revolutionary Socialists to advance with might and main the war program of the immediate abolition of Capitalism, and its slogan of uncompromising class struggle. All other programs, be they social-patriotism, bourgeois pacifism or revolutionary defeatism, are built on quicksand.

BOOKS

NATIONALISM AND SOCIALISM

THE WORLD OF NATIONS. A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx. By Solomon F. Bloom. Columbia University Press, New York. (225 pp. $2.50)

In the above work, Mr. Bloom, who is Professor of History at Brooklyn College, proves himself to be an outstanding Marxist scholar. His work throws a flood of light on the important question of Nationalism and its tributaries.

Among considerable sections of the Socialist movement it has been taken for granted that Nationalism and patriotism are bourgeois prejudices—anti-working class. Marx's admonition that "special regard must be paid to the institutions, customs and traditions of various lands . . . "* remained a sealed page. In this country the Socialist pathfinder, Daniel DeLeon, met determined opposition and open ridicule when he insisted that the American revolution and its traditions were not to be lightly dismissed as a mere bourgeois revolution, of no special concern to the workers. When DeLeon praised the revolutionary fathers as giant intellects and men of wide social vision he was sneered at as a chauvinist and a bourgeois romanticist.

Professor Bloom performs an invaluable service in definitely exploding the fiction that Marx was an anti-nationalist and opposed to enlightened patriotism.

At this time when in the name of patriotism and nationalism and under the banner of "National Unity," the capitalist class is seeking to win support of the workers for its imperialist war against the Hitler-Nazi regime, Professor Bloom's work has exceptional importance. On the one hand we have the social-patriots who accept the fiction of "National Unity," and at the other extreme we have the super-revolutionaries who reject the concepts of nationalism and patriotism outright.

Bloom writes:

> "Marx accepted national peculiarities and differences as substantial factors in history. He was equally impatient with conservative critics who regarded all radicals as anti-national and with radicals who pooh-poohed the importance of nationalism."
>
> "Marx redefined national concepts in Socialist terms. The enrichment of the material environment of society was in the national interest. The role of a leading class in improving the methods of production promoted the national welfare. Indeed, the activity of such a class was the most suitable vehicle for the promotion of the national interest as long as class divisions continued to exist. The Socialist program deserved the sanctions of enlightened patriotism in advanced countries. The

Speech at Hague Conference—"The First International,"* By Stelov, page 240.

classes which opposed the progressive class could be set down as enemies of the true national interest. . . .

"An enlightened patriotism which recognizes the bearing of International progress upon the national welfare seemed to Marx compatible and even fairly synonymous with sound Internationalism. The true patriot must further the advance of other nations if only to assure the progress of his own; the true Internationalist must strive for the advance of particular countries as the basis of the world's progress."

Nothing has contributed more to the confusion within the Socialist movement on the subject of nationalism than the vulgarization of Marx' and Engels' famous aphorism—"The workers have no country." Prof. Bloom points out how this slogan has been singularly misinterpreted.

"This blunt statement has been the object of much conservative criticism and radical speculation. It has been frequently taken to affirm precisely what Marx was at pains to deny, that Nationalities had no real existence, that they should not exist, that the notion of patriotism was foreign to the proletariat and that the doctrine of 'scientific socialism' implied some rather special attitude toward nationalism. The point of the *Manifesto* was simply that the question of nationalism was bound up with the question of a stake in one's country."

Continues Bloom:

"The whole tenor of the discussion (in the Communist Manifesto where this slogan was raised, Ed.) was a denial that Socialists were opposed to nations as such. 'We are accused,' Marx and Engels wrote, 'of wishing to do away with the "fatherland" and with "Nationality!" The "fatherland" has meant a country dominated by the exploiting classes—in modern times by the bourgeoisie. In that sense plainly, "the workers have no fatherland." We cannot take from them what they have not got.' . . ."

"The bourgeois 'fatherland' was not the country from the point of view of its potentialities for progress or the nation regarded democratically, but the aggregate of institutions, customs, laws and ideas which sanctified the right to property on a considerable scale. This was the fatherland repudiated in the Manifest."

That Bloom is on solid ground in refuting the contention that Marx was anti-nationalist in principle is corroborated by no less an authority than Lenin. Contrasting the two extreme war positions presented at the Stuttgart Conference of the 2nd International, the "defend the fatherland under all circumstances" position of the extreme right wing, and the anarchistic Herveist stand of repudiating nationalism in principle, Lenin wrote:*

> "The position that 'the proletarians have no fatherland' is actually stated in the *Communist Manifesto*. . . . But it does not follow from this that Herve and Herveists are right when they assert that it is immaterial to the proletariat in which fatherland it lives: whether it lives in Monarchist Germany, republican France or despotic Turkey. The fatherland, i. e., the given political, cultural and social environment, is the most powerful factor in the class struggle of the proletariat. The proletariat can not treat the political, social, and cultural conditions of its struggle with indifference or equanimity, consequently, it can not remain indifferent to the destiny of its country. But it is interested in the destiny of its country only *insofar* ***as*** **it affects its class struggle,** and not by virtue of some bourgeois 'patriotism' which sounds altogether indecent on the lips of a Social-Democrat."

Marx never lost an opportunity to ridicule the French Proudhonists, who repudiated in its entirety the concept of nationalism. In a letter to Engels* he scoffed at "the Proudhonist clique which declares nationalities to be an absurdity and attacks Bismarck and Garibaldi, etc., (for their efforts at state unification, Ed.)" In the same letter he makes the significant observation that "such tactics are useful and explainable as polemics against chauvinism." It is precisely in this sense that the famous aphorism, "The workers have no country," was employed in the *Communist Manifesto* — as a polemic against chauvinism.

Decidedly, *The World of Nations* is a MUST book for all students of social science. It is a brilliant contribution to the permanent literature of Marxism.**

**Selected Works*; Vol IV, pp 327, 328.
*Quoted in Lenin's *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, page 275.
**This review will be continued in our next issue.

PARTISAN REVIEW

poetry · criticism · stories · politics · art · discussion

The readers of MODERN SOCIALISM may be interested in the following features that have appeared in PARTISAN REVIEW so far this year:

JAN.-FEB.:
M.D. Zabel: *Archibald MacLeish, the Poet on Capitol Hill*

MARCH-APRIL:
Franz Kafka: *In the Penal Colony,* a story
George Orwell: *London Letter*

MAY-JUNE:
James Burnham: *The Theory of the Managerial Revolution*
Dwight Macdonald: *The End of Capitalism in Germany*
Uncensored Reports from German-Occupied France

JULY-AUG.:
Paul Mattick: *How New Is the "New Order" of Fascism?*
Greenberg and Macdonald: *Ten Propositions on the War*
Mary McCarthy: *The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt,* a story

SEPT.-OCT.:
What is Fascism?—a discussion by Victor Serge, Marceau Pivert, and Dwight Macdonald
W. R. Rodgers: *End of a World,* a long poem
G. L. K. Morris: *The Mechanics of Abstract Art*
Morton G. White: *Marx-Darwin-Wagner vs. Mr. Barzun*

SIX TIMES A YEAR ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

PARTISAN REVIEW, 45 Astor Place, New York City

Enclosed find $1.00. Please send me one year of PARTISAN REVIEW, beginning with the ..... issue. (Single copies, 25 cents. For Canada, add 15 cents; for other foreign countries, 30 cents.)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

SUBSCRIPTIONS REQUESTED

MODERN SOCIALISM as our readers well understand is not being published as a commercial proposition. There is absolutely no "market" for a magazine of this type, but there does exist a crying need for an independent, theoretical organ of Scientific Socialism free from the fetters of organizational competition and rivalry. MODERN SOCIALISM has appeared in response to this need.

There is no one subsidizing MODERN SOCIALISM and it is certain there are no financial angels lying in wait to smooth its path. This issue of MODERN SOCIALISM is made possible by the self-sacrificing efforts of a handful of co-thinkers with the Editor and Publisher. Future publication will be determined by the volume of subscriptions received.

Send in your subscription and get others to do the same.

MODERN SOCIALISM

140 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Enclosed find $1.00 for which please enter my subscription to MODERN SOCIALISM.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....